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EXCLUSIVE OPINION POLL NECK-AND-NECK RACE

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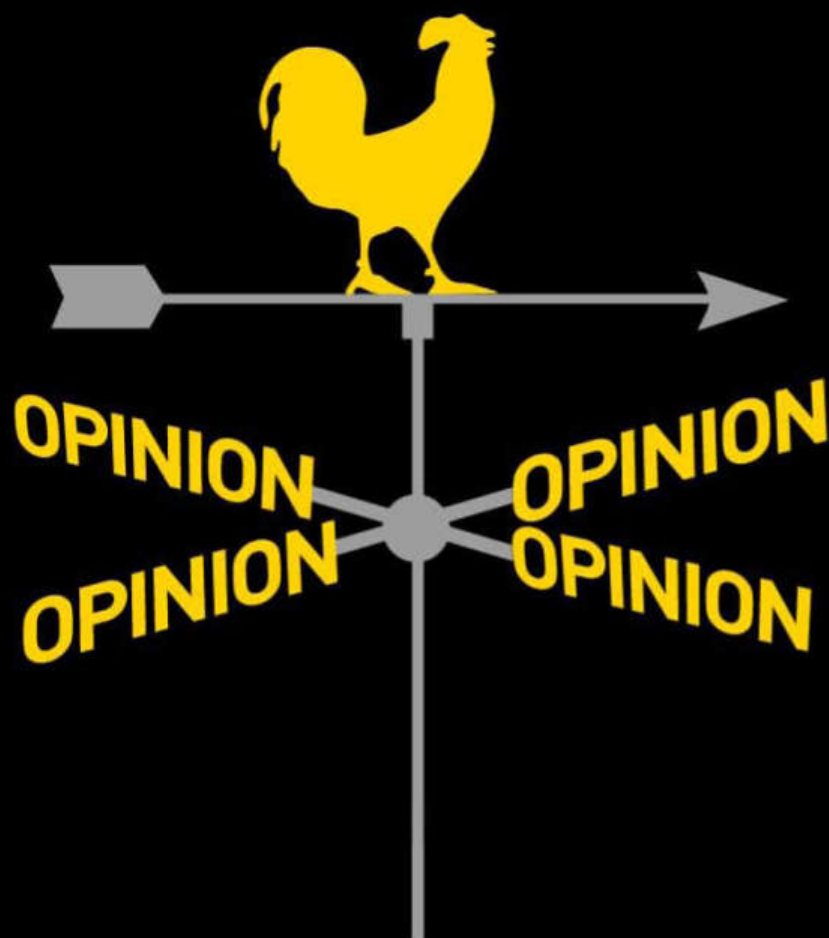
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FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

On September 27, Prime Minister Narendra Modi was in Silicon Valley breaking bread with its iconic Information Technology czars. The Valley is clearly the destination which Modi wants a 21st century India to emulate with twin visions of Make in India and Digital India. He, however, returned from an India of Tomorrow to a country where some pockets are seemingly still trapped in Medieval India. The lynching of a Muslim villager suspected of eating beef in India's most populous state, Uttar Pradesh, came just a day after the euphoric Silicon Valley address.

The emotive appeal of the cow as a political rallying cry is beyond doubt. Indian sepoys used the issue of rifle cartridges coated with beef and pork tallow to spark off India's First War of Independence in 1857. Over a century and a half later, political interests seem to be fanning similar sentiments but for narrow parochial gain. Their ideas, which call for segregating communities on diet, and worse, for instigating violence on a mere suspicion, target India's secular fabric. These notions are incompatible with a development agenda that aims to propel India towards a seat at the global high table.

One of Modi's ministers now wants to set up laboratories at various ports to investigate whether cow meat is being smuggled out in the guise of buffalo meat. Another minister is mulling a scheme to provide farmers with free fodder and subsidised shelters for unproductive cows. There will simply not be enough fodder or real estate to feed and house them, considering India has 191 million cows, bulls and bullocks. Such moves might appear to be in sync with the Constitution, which enshrines opposition to cow slaughter as a directive principle of state policy and the reason why 14 states have banned the slaughter of cow and its progeny. But in doing so, the states have ignored the economic logic that lies at the heart of the debate. Farmers buy cattle but prefer to sell them the moment they become unproductive.




Several states increased punishments for cow slaughter recently and Maharashtra expanded the definition to include all cow progeny. This move has hit the Rs 1,180 crore used-cattle market in the state. One estimate shows it will cost farmers in Maharashtra more than Rs 4,000 crore per year just to feed all 1.18 million unproductive bulls. You can only imagine what the cost would be if all of India was included.

Alarming, bans by various states do not seem to be based on any rational argument. States which have banned bull slaughter and their transport now face the problem of stray cattle. A growing cattle population has serious implications for a country whose cattle population currently makes up for nearly one-sixth of all greenhouse gas emissions from animals. These are serious issues for which viable alternatives need to be worked out before taking a hard line on the issue based on religious sentiments.

Our cover story explores how a ban on culling, part of a right-wing cultural agenda, could have implications beyond just meat. India is the world's largest beef exporter, earning over Rs 30,000 crore per year. The culling feeds other allied industries too. Indians cannot survive without cattle derivatives in items as diverse as medicines, fire extinguishers, bone china, surgical stitches, apparel and footwear. Cattle is already in more things than we realise.

The narrow politics propelling the cow agenda and ethnic vigilantism puts roadblocks on Prime Minister Modi's drive on development. The mandate given to this government in the General Election was for economic development, not for Hindu revivalism. The government will do well to remember that. Also, it should know that once you uncork the genie of religious tensions in a multicultural society like India, it is difficult to put it back. It will only hurtle India towards an Age of Chaos.


 (Aroon Purie)

COVER STORY
POLITICS OF BEEF

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The politics of beef, bans and intolerance is doing India's global image and Prime Minister Modi's politics no good.



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Cleanliness tops the charts at day-long singathon, hits the high notes with Prime Minister Narendra Modi giving away the first India Today Safaigiri Awards.

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Government must reform itself before it attempts to reform the economy says T.N. Ninan in a compelling narrative of a constantly changing India.



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The first city to be captured by mujahideen in 1988, Kunduz is the first to fall—again. Although won back since, Kabul now seeks outside help to keep the Taliban at bay.

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The government lays down a roadmap for industry on plans and commitments ahead of the Paris climate summit.



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For both NDA and Janata combine, keeping vote banks by their side is as critical as wooing new sections in make-or-break elections.

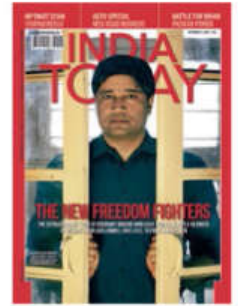
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Cover by **ROHIT CHAWLA & SAURABH SINGH**
Photo by SHUTTERSTOCK

The New Freedom Fighters

OCTOBER 5, 2015

The extraordinary saga of ordinary Indians who have turned whistle-blowers by risking their livelihoods, and lives, to fight corruption



“The new-age freedom fighters give us a ray of hope in a country where corruption has become institutionalised.”

INDU SHANKAR, *Varanasi*

Leading from the Front

It would take more than the high-sounding words of political leaders and the daring exposés of whistle-blowers to uproot corruption from the country (New Freedom Fighters, October 5). Each of us must do our bit by saying no to paying bribes and reporting corrupt officials to the police or authorities concerned. From a drive initiated by a few brave individuals, the fight against corruption should become a revolution.

MANJU PANT, *via email*

Your cover story stands out for illustrating brilliant examples of ordinary people who have taken on the powerful politician-bureaucrat-criminal nexus which has subverted every public institution to make unlawful gains. Despite risks to their lives, these whistle-blowers are fighting for a just cause. They deserve to be called freedom fighters.

H.R. SATYANARAYANA, *Mysuru*



Leaving on His Own Terms

Sometime back, there was talk of giving Jagmohan Dalmiya, laid low by health complications, an honourable exit from the BCCI (The Last Emperor, October 5). But Dalmiya had his own plans. He made sure he bid goodbye as the

head of the world's most powerful cricket body. Dalmiya will forever be remembered as the man who made Indian cricket a self-sufficient entity and engineered a shift of power base from its spiritual home in Lord's to Kolkata's Eden Gardens. Some called him an old fox for his shrewdness, some others lauded his financial acumen. In his chequered administrative career, he saw it all: the good, the bad and the ugly.

K.S. JAYATHEERTHA, *Bengaluru*

I found your story lacking in inputs on whistle-blowers who are working in the southern states of the country. Whistle-blowers such as U. Sagayam, who has relentlessly fought against the sand mining mafia in Tamil Nadu, were unfortunately ignored.

H. NAGARAJAN, *Paris*

Your story brings to the fore some known and some not-so-well known anti-graft crusaders. Fighting a corrupt system requires courage and conviction—courage to take on the mighty and conviction to succeed against heavily stacked odds.

VIPUL PANDE, *Nainital*



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NEW FREEDOM FIGHTERS

Media must take the lead in the fight against corruption. Often, due to a lack of means, ordinary people are not able to sustain their campaign against graft.

Anil Singh

Kudos to these officials who check corruption at their workplace.

Sanjiv Gupta

India is watching, and the corrupt will be punished.

Mayur Panghaal

It is the government's duty to provide protection to whistle-blowers.

Ramesh Agarwal
NEPAL'S MISSED TRYST
WITH DESTINY

India can speak about a lack of inclusiveness in Nepal when it starts practising what it preaches.

Ashim Pathak

Your support to the fearless 'new freedom fighters' is as important as their brave efforts. They must not be left to stand alone. Your story on their exemplary work will inspire others to join the fight. Systemic corruption is deep-rooted in China, with no room for anti-

graft rhetoric. I hope India can avoid the path taken by China and instead emulate Hong Kong's success with its own version of the Independent Commission Against Corruption.

LULU YU, *Hong Kong*

I want to congratulate the magazine for acknowledging the role of whistle-blowers in flagging corruption in the system and forcing the government and the judiciary to act. Little has been written about RTI activists, but by celebrating their achievements, more people will be encouraged to take up the fight against corruption.

MANJULA PAL, *Delhi*

Through your story, I now know about the daily struggles that whistle-blowers face to expose corruption. Their never-say-die attitude, their ability to continue doing their work despite threats to their lives and their dedication towards the country are qualities that are rare to find in today's time when people are obsessed with making money.

B. RAJASEKARAN, *Bengaluru*

Stop Being a Bully

India's concerns about Nepal's new constitution are well-founded because several conditions



Give Access to Netaji Files

By declassifying the files on Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has thrown down the gauntlet to the NDA government at the Centre (Netaji's Open Secrets, October 5). The ball is in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's court. Hardly anyone will now buy the argument that bringing the files into the public domain could jeopardise India's relations with "friendly" countries.

ANJUM M. SAMEL, *Thane*

Like several countries, India too should follow the 30-year-old rule where government documents are put in the public domain 30 years after they were drafted or formulated. Although Mamata Banerjee's decision to declassify Netaji files is a shrewd political move, it is nonetheless the right thing to do. The Narendra Modi-led government too should follow the West Bengal government in giving public access to the files that trace the life of Netaji after his disappearance in 1945.

J.S. ACHARYA, *Hyderabad*

have not been met (Nepal's Himalayan Leap, October 5). Considering the border between the two countries is porous, India's stress on an inclusive constitution to prevent a law and order situation is valid. Time will tell if this constitution turns out to be Nepal's 'Himalayan leap' to peace or chaos.

AKSHAY VISWANATHAN,

Thiruvananthapuram

Nepal's new constitution may have patent inequities, but it is for the people of that country and the government to resolve those. India must stop playing a bully and hurting its own prospects in the subcontinent. Obstruction to free flow of goods to Nepal is counterproductive. It will make it incumbent on Nepal to upgrade its trade and logistics with neighbouring China.

BISHAN SAHAI, *via email*

Correction

In the Glasshouse item on senior VHP leader Ashok Singhal's biography (Changing Views, October 12), the name of the author was wrongly published as Mahesh Mamchanka. The book *Ashok Singhal-Hindutva ke Purodha* is written by Mahesh Bhagchandka. The error is regretted.

Rebels Galore

The three major contenders for the 324 seats at stake in the Bihar Assembly elections have spent so much time brawling over tickets that they have very little firepower left to aim at each other during the campaign.

All the parties had to fly in senior leaders from the Centre to douse the flames of rebellion. The BJP seemed to be the worst hit by this pre-poll bickering and its state President Inder Singh Namdhari publicly accused



the national Vice-President Vijaye Raje Scindia of having imposed her nominees on the state.

The situation in the Congress(I) was no better. A group of the party's sitting MLAs who were denied tickets threatened to hold a rally and state Congress chief Tariq Anwar—none of whose nominees were given tickets—issued a statement declaring he would not campaign.

In the Janata Dal camp too the flag of rebellion was unfurled. Senior leader Hukumdeo Narayan Yadav, MP, threatened not to allow Devi Lai and Ajit Singh to campaign in north Bihar. Complained Yadav: "The Central leaders have connived with Jagannath Mishra because in the Brahmin-dominated areas of Darbhanga and Madhubani, the Janata Dal has not nominated a single Brahmin."

by Uttam Sengupta



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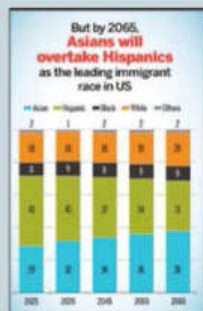
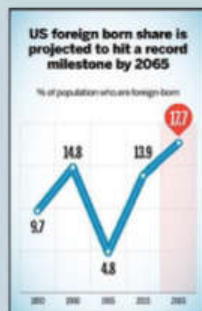
Let's see While people have been urged to surrender their LPG subsidy to help the poor, will VIPs give up the security cover they don't deserve? <http://bit.ly/1Rs5T2x>



The Apple of everyone's eyes Apple has set a new record with 13 million new iPhones sold in just three days. <http://bit.ly/1VB6uob>



Asian invasion Did you know Asians are all set to surpass Hispanics as the largest group of US immigrants by 2065? <http://bit.ly/1j3plkl>



MOST SHARED ON FACEBOOK

Watch how Hindu women helped a Muslim woman deliver a baby in a temple 1,484

Gruesome murder in Hyderabad restaurant for refusing hafta 820

Young girl from MP builds toilet in village with scholarship money 737



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Young girl from MP builds toilet in village with scholarship money 6,988

Watch how Hindu women helped a Muslim woman deliver a baby in a temple 1,402

Narendra Modi is a 'zalim' and a 'shaitan', says Akbaruddin Owaisi 4,399



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THE POLITICS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

The Paris climate conference in December is expected to herald a new global charter for action on climate change. But will it? The fact is that for the past 25-odd years—the framework convention on climate change was signed in Rio in 1992—countries have found every reason to prevaricate and obfuscate. So, why would anything change now?

It is also a fact that when countries meet to negotiate a climate change deal, they are discussing economics, and not ecology. No country in the world has found a way to de-link its economic growth with the growth of greenhouse emissions—mainly carbon dioxide, which is emitted when countries burn fossil fuels to meet energy needs. So, until now, there has been talk about the need to combat climate change. But the inconvenient truth is that countries, particularly the rich nations, have done little to cut emissions at the scale and pace needed. The world is at risk today because of this inaction.

The other inconvenient truth is that climate change requires the world to share global atmospheric space. This is because carbon dioxide, the key pollutant, has a long life and once emitted, stays in the atmosphere for more than 100 years. The emissions of the already-rich countries have filled up the atmosphere and today, the emerging and poor countries are asking for their right to development. But there is no space left for them to grow.

This is why the 1992 climate convention had agreed that the rich, industrialised world, which had created the problem, had a natural debt to repay. They needed to reduce so that the developing world could increase and fill up the remaining atmospheric space. It also set conditions that there would be fund and technology transfer from the rich countries so that we could grow differently.

But the rich countries did not reduce as promised—the US, Australia, Canada—walked out of this agreement. At the same time, countries such as China increased their emissions. Now the world has run out of space and time.

Today it is clear that climate change is not about the future. It is a clear and present danger. In India, we are already seeing unseasonal rain, erratic and weird weather, which has led to huge crop losses across the country. It is clear that we cannot link any one event to climate change. But it is equally clear that these events are not normal variation of weather. These are deadly signs of things to come in a climate-risked, warming world.

So we need to act. We need to

reduce emissions drastically and urgently, and we need to do this so that developing countries secure their right to development.

To do this, it is now agreed that at the Paris conference, every country will submit its Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC)—its climate action plan. The sum of these plans must add up so that the world remains below the 2°C rise in temperature, which is seen as the guardrail by climate scientists. The problem is that these plans are not adding up to much.

According to the latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), UN's top scientific body, the world's remaining carbon budget is very limited. Between now and 2100, the world is only left with 1,000 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide, if it wants to meet the 2°C temperature rise target. In Paris, the question is how this carbon budget will be divided?

The current emission reduction commitments of all countries including India add up to 800 billion tonnes at most. There is a gigatonne gap that needs to be filled. But the question also is how and who should take the burden of reducing emissions and by how much.

The question is particularly difficult because the world has already consumed some 1,900 billion tonnes between 1850 and now. A single country like the United States, with barely 5 per cent of the world's population, has appropriated 21 per cent of the carbon budget. This is its natural debt, and like a financial debt—where countries overdraw on their capital—should be paid.

But the US wants to erase the historical responsibility of countries and push the burden of transition to the developing world. This should not be acceptable to us.

Currently, the US climate change action plan is weak and meaningless. It wants to do as little as possible to reduce its emissions. As a result, it will further appropriate more carbon budget in the coming years. This is when it needs to vacate this urgently and make space for developing countries such as India to grow.

So, in Paris, countries such as India must ask tough questions. We must make it clear that we are not in denial about the threat of climate change or the need for an effective and ambitious agreement. We must be clear that we are willing to act. But we must demand that the already-rich world must walk the talk and not just talk the talk. This is about our common future.

Illustration by SAURABH SINGH



The inconvenient truth is that rich nations, particularly, have done little to cut emissions at the scale and pace needed. The world is at risk today because of this inaction.

The writer is the director general of the Centre for Science and Environment

CRITICS CORNERED

After his party's debacle in the Delhi Assembly polls, BJP President Amit Shah has stepped up his outreach to party workers and the public through a new personal website, www.amitshah.co.in. The 'press section' of the website, launched on September 26, has four sub-sections—News, Interviews, Editorials and 'Critic'. The last section has 30 pages of criticism of the party chief reported in the media, news reports on his controversial comments and statements from political adversaries. Party sources say Shah wants to project the image of a politician who welcomes criticism, but others are not so sure. The links and press clippings look more like a dossier to tell his critics that he is watching them.



Illustration by SAURABH SINGH



FLUSH WITH PRAISES

Exactly 16 months after the birth of Telangana, its Irrigation Minister **T. Harish Rao** has achieved a 'Swachh' distinction. His constituency, Siddipet, has 43,933 toilets in the rural areas and 20,800 in urban pockets, covering all households. It is now the state's first open defecation-free (ODF) constituency. Rao roped in the Visakhapatnam-headquartered Gitam University to build 5,531 bio-toilets, making Siddipet a role model for the 118 other constituencies in the state.



AT YOUR SERVICE

The twin threats—state assembly elections less than two years away and criticism from his father and SP chief Mulayam Singh Yadav—have forced Uttar Pradesh CM **Akhilesh Yadav** to act on making his government more responsive to the people. The CM is trying to push a new legislation on Right to Service, which will make it mandatory for designated government officials to provide required public services within a stipulated time frame. The chief secretary's office will make a draft of the proposed act by November. Under this act, the government will form a Right to Service Commission.

DELICATE BALANCE



Underlining an increasingly careful balancing act between the US and China, India will kick off two high-profile defence exercises with both countries on the same day. On October 12, Indian ships will sail with vessels from the US and Japan in the Bay of Bengal during Exercise Malabar, while soldiers from the Army's Naga Regiment will begin the annual "Hand-in-Hand" anti-terror exercises in China with the PLA's 14th Group Army. Exercise Malabar will be on a considerably more advanced scale, with the Chinese drills aimed more at building trust between the two still-wary militaries.

HINDU UNDIVIDED FAMILY

BJP Kerala state unit president **Bv. Muraleedharan** brought Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana (SNDP) Yogam chief Vellapally Natesan for a closed door meeting with PM Modi on October 1. The party is in talks with the SNDP, which represents Kerala's Ezhava community, for an alliance in the Kerala assembly elections due in March next year. But the RSS is cautious about a single community organisation steering an alliance with the BJP as an option to the LDF and UDF. The Sangh wants a tactical understanding with other communities, including the Nair Service Society and the Viswakarma Sabha for maximum gains.



READ BETWEEN THE LINES

A trifle late in the day, but the Punjab government is encouraging civil servants to read more. A recently issued nudging communiqué reminds bureaucrats of the existence of the Punjab Civil Secretariat Library in Chandigarh. It gently cites that scores of rare publications, old maps, gazettes and important legislations, besides a wide selection of books on history, geography, travel and biographies are stocked in the library. However, at last count, there were no additional footfalls at the ever-so-lonely library.

AFRICAN SUMMER

Organisers of the third India-Africa Summit to be held in New Delhi between October 26 and 29 are worried about complaints from African diplomats about the indecent behaviour of Indians towards their staff and family members living in the country. Several African diplomats have said they plan to shift their families from India due to this problem. MEA staffers say they are encountering such complaints from diplomats every day and fear it could even come up for discussion at the prestigious summit.

BREAKING THE NEWS CYCLE

Private TV channels are set to lose viewers after the government ensured that only Doordarshan News is shown on TV sets installed at airport terminals, railway platforms and lobbies of government offices. The authorities in the ministries concerned have also been directed accordingly. Sources say the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is now advising the public broadcaster on selection of experts for panel discussions.



FREE FOR ALL by Saurabh Singh

MODI TEA STALL
Bihar Elections 2015

KSHATRIYA



BRAHMIN



BANIYA



MUSLIM



SC/ST

Jannet

IRRESISTIBLE DRAW



PM Narendra Modi and BJP chief Amit Shah are the two obvious choices to lead the campaign for Bihar assembly polls. But HRD Minister **Smriti Irani**, at number three, is a surprise favourite of candidates, even ahead of Home Minister Rajnath Singh and External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj. Candidates say her aggressive oratory, popularity as a TV star and the fact that she is the youngest minister in the Modi cabinet, make her a compelling campaign draw. Irani has already finished four rallies in Bihar and is scheduled to address 25 more across the state.



SLIDING STOCK?

The BJP top leadership is reportedly unhappy with Commerce Minister **Nirmala Seetharaman**. The minister, although hardworking, is known to lose her temper easily and is believed to be struggling to deal with bureaucrats in her ministry. The bigger, more worrying perception in the party is that Seetharaman is not able to move forward on the Prime Minister's agenda to boost ease of doing business and Make in India, and needs to iron out problems in her ministry.

SEEKING A PLACE IN THE HOUSE

The Congress reportedly wants former Rajasthan CM **Ashok Gehlot** out of Rajasthan mainly for two reasons. Insiders say the party wants voters to forget the allegations of corruption and inefficiency during his tenure and also because party Vice President Rahul Gandhi wants PCC chief Sachin Pilot to be the next CM candidate. Gehlot, however, wants to stay put in the state and has sent out signals showing his willingness to be the leader of opposition, saying that incumbent Rameshwar Dudi, also a Rahul nominee, has not been performing well in the Assembly.



with SANTOSH KUMAR, ANANTH KRISHNAN, ASIT JOLLY, ASHISH MISRA, ROHIT PARIHAR, AMARANTH K. MENON, SHWETA PUNJ AND ANSHUMAN TIWARI



BEHIND THE PINK RIBBON

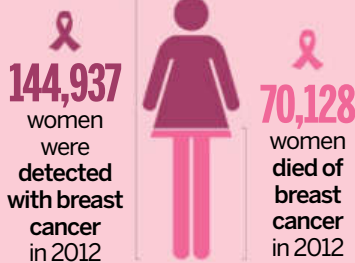
Breast cancer has emerged as the most common cancer among women in India. On the start of Breast Cancer Awareness month, a look at how this emperor of maladies is fast becoming a killer.



A FATAL BLOW



1 in every 2 women diagnosed with breast cancer succumbs to the disease



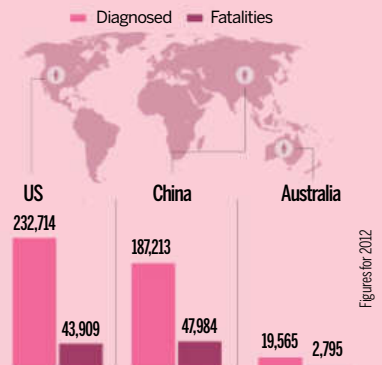
DOUBLE STRIKE



7% women between 30 and 40 had breast cancer in 1990

16% women between 30 and 40 had breast cancer in 2012

GLOBAL MALADY



DEATH STRIKE RATE



NOT SO ROSY FUTURE



155,000 breast cancer cases are likely to be detected in India in 2015

76,000 women are expected to succumb to it

BUSTING SOME MYTHS

#1

A lump in the breast means breast cancer

Truth A small percentage of lumps in the breasts are cancer but shouldn't be ignored

#2

Breast cancer is contagious

Truth It cannot be transferred to somebody else

#3

Breast cancer is a woman's disease

Truth Men can also be afflicted with breast cancer

A STITCH IN TIME

One-third of all cancer cases are preventable



Self breast exam

Routine clinical breast exam—Mammography



Testing for genes like BRCA1, BRCA2 and PALB2 that help breast cells function normally

Source: Globocan 2012

Story: Priya Kapoor

COVER STORY **POLITICS OF BEEF**

BEEF, BAN & BLOODSHED

By Kunal Pradhan, Kaushik Deka,
Damayanti Datta and Gayatri Jayaraman



HOW THE BRUTAL POLITICS OF SOCIAL DIVISION ON THE BASIS



Photograph by K ASIF

MOHAMMAD AKHLAQ'S HOUSE IN
BISAHRA VILLAGE IN UTTAR
PRADESH AFTER THE
MURDEROUS ATTACK BY AN
ANGRY MOB ON SEPTEMBER 28

OF DIET AND RELIGION IS DAMAGING INDIA'S SECULAR FABRIC

In the heart of Uttar Pradesh's Bisahra village—an island of brick-and-cement houses in the middle of open fields that extend to the horizon—the redness of the sun is slowly being consumed by a cold, empty darkness. It's 7 p.m. The sun has just set, and the narrow by-lanes are covered with

black shadows. Everyone is indoors, except for a sea of policemen standing guard at the village *chaupal*, the silver stars on their shoulders glistening in the pale moon light. Here, in a muddy sub-tributary of the metalled road that services the village, a two-house cluster enclosed by walls, and accessed only by a tiny alley, became the scene of a horrific murder. A crime of rage, faith and righteous indignation. But, above all, a crime of politics.

On September 28, an ordinary Monday, a series of extraordinary events led a mob of angry Hindus, most of them land-owning Thakurs, to march into that tiny *galli* in a fit of anger. They had heard rumours that a cow—holy and maternal to them—had been slaughtered, eaten, and its entrails dumped at an electric transformer in the village. After a flurry of text and WhatsApp messages—the village gets 3G, sometimes even 4G networks—a local Hindu priest was persuaded to sound a battle-cry from the Bada Mandir loudspeaker.

More than 1,000 people proceeded to the alley where Mohammad Akhlaq, 50, the suspected cow killer and one of the few Muslims who live in this part of the village, had just turned in for the night on the first-floor terrace. As shouts of "*maaro, maaro*" echoed through the alley, the mob barged through Akhlaq's light-blue front door, bludgeoned his head with a sewing machine and battered his 22-year-old son Danish with a brick. Akhlaq was then dragged downstairs, through the alley onto the main road, and left near the transformer as fitting vengeance for his suspected crime. He was declared dead in the morning. Danish is battling for life in Kailash Hospital in Noida, owned, ironically, by Mahesh Sharma, BJP leader and ultra-conservative Union culture minister, who has already been to the village to offer his condolences to Akhlaq's family and his assurance to families of the arrested Hindus that he knows the lynching

was just an "accident". One of the key accused, Vishal, is the son of a local BJP leader, Sanjay Rana.

Sharma is just one of the political leaders who have descended on this village since the killing—from Rahul Gandhi of the Congress to Arvind Kejriwal of the Aam Aadmi Party, from Asaduddin Owaisi of the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen to BJP MLA Sangeet Som, who is one of the accused in the 2013 Muzaffarnagar riots—poisoning an already vitiated atmosphere despite a sterling effort by the local administration led by District Magistrate N.P. Singh to ensure that the violence doesn't explode into a full-blown communal riot.

It's easy to dismiss what happened in Bisahra as a one-off. But the murder is only the most brutal manifestation of an environment of conflict that has been created by a series of divisive statements and decisions delivered from various pulpits in New Delhi and in several states across India over the last few months. As a result, India today stands at the crossroads of a furious debate over majoritarianism, Hindutva, the very essence of Indian-ness, and the need for a cultural renaissance that aims to take the country back to its supposed pre-colonial and pre-Mughal glory days. By spilling into the streets, the

debate is putting to test not just the nation's secular fibre, as illustrated by Bisahra, but also endangering the modernisation and development mantras on which Prime Minister Narendra Modi had stormed into power in 2014.

"Killing cannot be justified but the followers of religions, which have come from outside the geographical and cultural boundaries of India, must understand and accept the 5,000-year-old civilisational tradition and philosophy of India. It's not about following Hinduism, it's about being Indian," Muralidhar Rao, a BJP national general secretary, tells INDIA TODAY. The debate has RSS ideologues on one side, liberal theorists on the other, with Modi's ruling NDA, many of whose leaders have close links with the RSS, stuck in the middle trying to do a balancing act between the principles of progressive liberalism and aggressive nationalism. As things stand, the Sangh Parivar seems to be winning on several fronts—from *sanskriti* (culture) to *shiksha* (education) to *sanchar* (communication).

This is coming at a heavy cost. Even as Modi travels the world to promote India as an investment destination and a manufacturing hub, the country continues to be burdened by a parallel agenda for "cultural and social rejuvenation" that strikes at the very heart of his push for modernisation. The ban on the slaughter of the cow and its progeny, for example, has economic implications across the board. It adversely affects exports, the environment, and the rural economy—all causes that Modi is championing, and all issues that need to be addressed before taking a hard line. A spate of controversies, from beef ban to rewriting textbooks to a takeover of cultural institutions to *ghar wapsi* and *love jihad* are sending mixed signals, at a critical juncture for the nation, about what the new government stands for—development or Hindutva.



Even as Modi promotes India as an investment destination, the country is burdened by a parallel agenda for 'cultural and social rejuvenation'.



HOLY COW: THE LEGAL POSITION



NO BAN

States where there is no ban on slaughter.

DRACONIAN BAN

The ban on slaughter is so strict that you may have to spend 10 years in jail or pay a fine of up to Rs 10,000 if you eat, sell, possess, transport, export the cow genus (not buffalo). In some states, like in Maharashtra, it is a non-bailable offence.

BAN WITH CONDITION

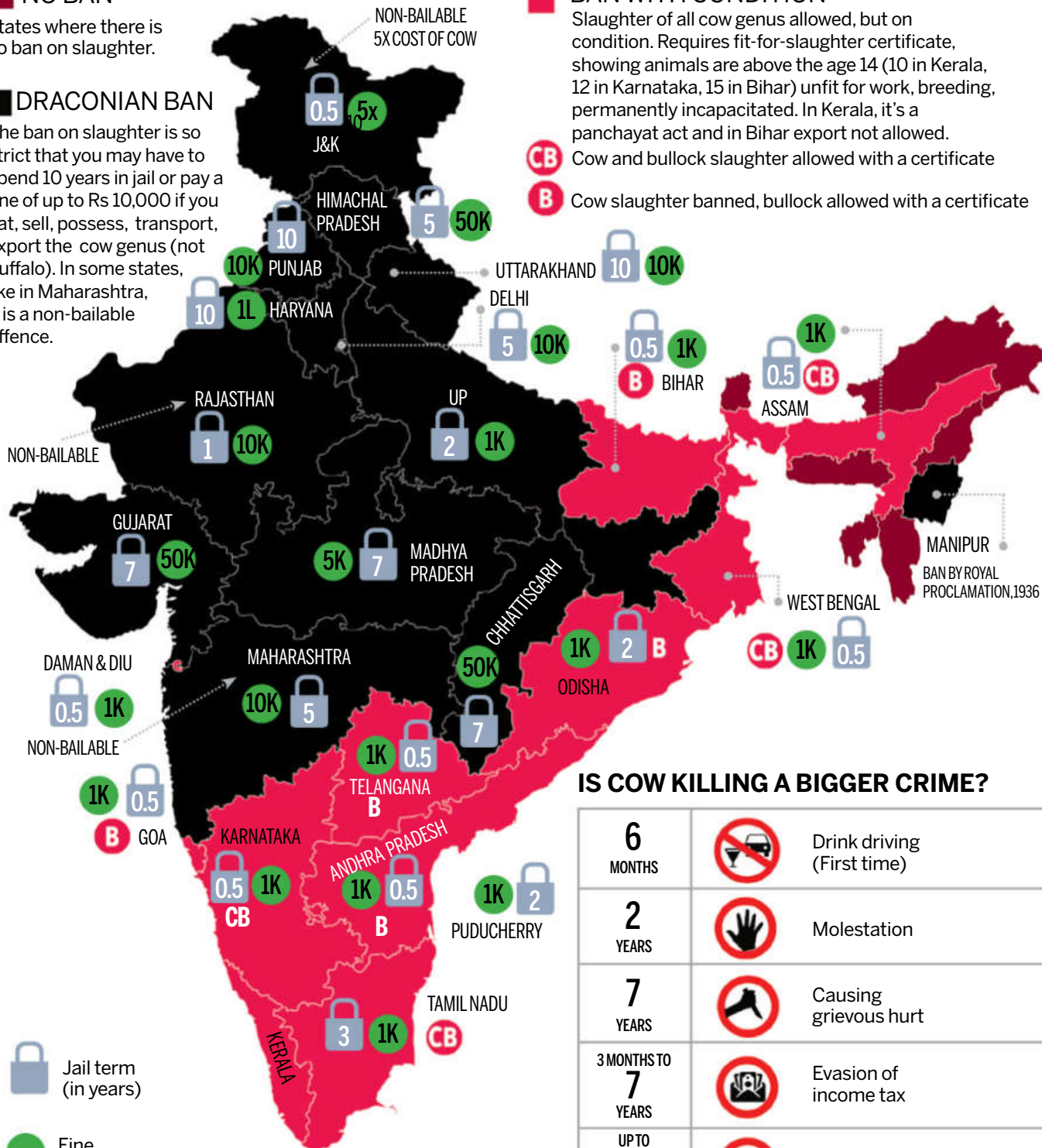
Slaughter of all cow genus allowed, but on condition. Requires fit-for-slaughter certificate, showing animals are above the age 14 (10 in Kerala, 12 in Karnataka, 15 in Bihar) unfit for work, breeding, permanently incapacitated. In Kerala, it's a panchayat act and in Bihar export not allowed.

CB

Cow and bullock slaughter allowed with a certificate

B

Cow slaughter banned, bullock allowed with a certificate



IS COW KILLING A BIGGER CRIME?

6 MONTHS		Drink driving (First time)
2 YEARS		Molestation
7 YEARS		Causing grievous hurt
3 MONTHS TO 7 YEARS		Evasion of income tax
UP TO 10 YEARS		Cow slaughter

Compiled by DAMAYANTI DATTA
Graphics by SAURABH SINGH & NAOREM SANJOY SINGH

*In all states there is no ban on slaughter of buffaloes
Source: Ministry of Agriculture; NSSO, 2014

And the Prime Minister's silence on several of these issues, including the Bisahra killing, is only adding to the confusion about his idea of India.

Law and Disorder

By virtue of being the latest flashpoint and because of its immediate bearing on our daily lives, the vocal demand for banning the slaughter of cows and their progeny across India has become the most sensitive of all the topics on the saffron agenda. It is also the easiest issue on which to fan religious sentiments in our agrarian nation where bovines are in abundance, particularly by singling out Muslims as "cow killers", as the Bisahra incident proves. One allegation is even that the BJP is raising the issue to benefit from polarisation in the upcoming Bihar polls. "This is not an issue of widespread concern for the holy animal, it's about scoring political points," alleges Congress leader Salman Khurshid. "The BJP is not clear of its economic and political priorities. They pick up issues which are destructive and disruptive for our national integration."

In ancient India, cows were seen as a symbol of wealth and as a source of sustenance as ploughers, and providers of milk, fuel and fertiliser. There was also a deep religious and mythological symbolism because Lord Krishna was a cowherd and Nandi, the bull, was a Hindu deity. But they were neither revered nor inviolable like they are today. Over time, as the religious sentiment surrounding the cow grew, so did the conflict—with the arrival in the 16th century of the Mughals, who held no such reverence, and particularly with the arrival of the British in the 18th century because the Europeans were habituated to eating beef.

India's Constituent Assembly mulled over the status of cows at great length. On Wednesday, November 24, 1948, the following discussion in Constitution Hall, New Delhi, has been recorded in the annals:

Pandit Thakur Dass Bhargava: "The cow is 'Kam-Dhenu' to us...I submit that we should consider it from an economic point of view..."

Syed Muhammad Saiadulla: "There is a lurking suspicion in the minds of many that it is the Muslim people who are responsible for this slaughter of cows. That is absolutely wrong."

Bhargava: "Quite wrong."

Saiadulla: "I am glad..."

Vignettes from the drafting process show that cows had led to a debate between two opposing camps: protectionists such as Bhargava and Seth Govind Das versus those who opposed the anti-cow-killing cause such as Jawaharlal Nehru and B.R. Ambedkar. The attempt to include "bulls, bullocks, young stock of genus cow" under the rubric "cow" was voted down in favour of "milch" cows. And finally it found its way in the Constitution, Article 48, not as a fundamental right but a directive principle of state policy, imposing a "duty" on states "to apply those principles in making laws". The question of law—whether a directive principle can trump the fundamental rights of minorities—has not yet been solved.

The judgment that is the basis for the current clamour came in 2005, in *State of Gujarat vs Mirzapur Moti Kureshi Kassab*, where a seven-judge bench of the Supreme Court upheld a complete ban on slaughter—not just of the cow but the genus. Popular Hindu sentiments were not mentioned, nor right to livelihood or cruelty to animals. Instead, an economic argument was put forth based on the "value" of cows—milch, buffalo, oxen, young or old—from its urine and dung.

Today, there is no national law on cow slaughter, says Alok Prasanna Kumar, research director of a non-profit legal think tank in Delhi, Vidhi Centre For Legal Policy, who has compiled all state-level enactments on slaughter of cows and other cattle (*see graphic*). "Various states have varying levels of restrictions," he says: no ban in most of the North-east, Kerala and Lakshadweep, although animals below age 10 cannot be killed; Tamil Nadu, Assam and West Bengal require a fit-for-slaughter certificate, old or of no economic use; Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Telangana, Bihar, Goa and Odisha ban cow slaughter, but require a certificate for other animals. In most



of the other states slaughter of cow and its progeny, including bulls and bullocks of all ages, is fully banned.

After the 2005 Gujarat verdict, the pathway towards stringent state enactments started from 2011, with Madhya Pradesh framing penal provisions of seven-year jail term for cow slaughter and transport of any cow progeny. Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab have also imposed a ban on slaughter, transport, export, sale and consumption of beef (bull, bullock, ox, heifer or calf) in 2015, excluding canned beef and killing "by accident or in self defence". The Maharashtra Animal Preservation (Amendment) Bill, 1995, passed in March, 2015, is the strictest—a non-bailable offence with a punishment up to five years of imprisonment or Rs 10,000 fine or both—for slaughter, sale, possession, consumption and export of the cow genus. Challenged in the Bombay High Court, the state has been asked to justify why other animals should not be included under the ban. In Muslim-majority Jammu & Kashmir, widespread protests and a ruckus in the Assembly finally ended this October 5 with the Supreme Court suspending the ban for two months and



INDIA HAS A TOTAL OF 191 MILLION COWS AND THEIR PROGENY AND NOT ENOUGH SHELTERS TO HOUSE THEM

constituting a three-member bench to adjudicate on the issue.

“The cow is just an excuse and it’s extremely dangerous,” argues jurist KTS Tulsi. “The law is being used to crystallise public opinion against other communities and create divisions in society. Do you want another Babri Masjid or, worse, another Godhra?”

Bovine Economics

Organisations such as the RSS and its affiliates now want a universal ban on slaughtering cows, including bulls and bullocks, but the numbers make the discussion more complicated than a blanket restriction on culling based on religious sentiments. The “Pink Revolution”—a tag used derisively by Modi during his 2014 election campaign to describe bovine meat exports—feeds allied industries to an extent that most anti-culling advocates don’t fully understand. Parts of cows and their progeny, from horns to hooves, are today found in daily-use items as diverse as medicines, tennis racquets, fire extinguishers, bone china, surgical stitches, apparel and footwear (see *graphic*).

India has a total of 190.9 million

cows and bulls, and an additional 108.7 million water buffaloes—together roughly 25 per cent of India’s human population. There is simply no space for *gaushalas* for all, which leads to them spilling onto the streets. India exported 2.4 million tonnes of buffalo meat in 2014-15, which made up 23.5 per cent of global beef exports according to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy, to 65 countries including Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand and Saudi Arabia. Valued at Rs 30,000 crore, this accounted for 1 per cent of India’s total exports. But it is only a small part of the bovine economy.

The consumption of beef is 30 per cent of slaughter, says Haji Mohammad Ali Qureshi, president of the Bombay Suburban Beef Dealers’ Association, the rest is traded for other purposes. This includes leather, in which India holds nearly 5 per cent of the global market; gelatine, which is used not just in food products but also in photography and as a coating for medicine capsules; and soaps and toothpaste, which use handcrafted bone powder as part of the manufacturing process. Not just that, horn powder is also used in the foam used by fire-fighters to put out a fire. “No

matter how religious you are, will you let your house burn down?” a trader asks. The average Indian today simply cannot survive without items derived from cows, bulls and bullocks, and a ban on culling would not affect only the beef-eating population.

A ban on bovine slaughter also impacts India’s rural economy, in which the life cycle of bulls and bull-ocks offers farmers a sustainable economical model. If a farmer bought a bullock for Rs 25,000 to Rs 50,000, it usually remains sellable at the same price for about two years. Once it becomes unproductive or uneconomical due to injury or illness, the farmer sells it for culling for Rs 10,000 to Rs 20,000. This 40 per cent return on investment then allows the farmer to raise capital for a replacement animal. In Maharashtra alone, the used-cattle market yielded an annual turnover of Rs 1,180 crore until a ban this year by the BJP government under Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. Now, a farmer with an unproductive bull has nowhere to go. The average bovine consumes 60-70 litres of water a day and 30-50 kg of fodder. This costs an estimated Rs 39,336 per bull per year. With 1.18 million unproductive bulls in the state, feeding them would cost an estimated Rs 4,677 crore per year.

Another fallout of too many stray cows is their dangerous contribution to global warming—way more than the distressing levels of vehicular pollution choking our cities. India’s cows are, believe it or not, central to the current debate on climate change. Like buffaloes, sheep, and goats, cows excrete high quantities of methane, a green house gas (GHG) capable of trapping 21 times more heat than carbon dioxide that irretrievably escapes into the atmosphere. India’s total livestock population of over half-a-billion, also including goats, camels, horses and other such animals, accounts for more than a sixth of the total GHGs from the world’s livestock. Data published last year in the *Asian-Australasian Journal of Animal Sciences* shows that India’s livestock annually produces 14.32 million tonnes of GHGs, which is 15 per cent of the global total.

These are problems that the

government needs to solve, with clear alternatives for over-population, the impact on the rural economy, and the effect on the environment, while making a case to maintain the sanctity of the cow and its progeny.

Fadnavis, however, is categorical. "Muslim countries ban pork and no one protests. People get used to it," he tells INDIA TODAY. "Only the progeny of cows are banned. Water buffaloes are open to the menu. This is our culture, and people will respect us if we respect our own culture." But unlike Gulf nations which are mostly Islamic kingdoms, India takes pride in its diversity. The idea of secularism is ingrained in the Constitution, and a model followed by nations where religious identity reigns supreme, may not be the right approach. "For black Americans living in the United States for generations, America is their home," says sociologist Dipankar Gupta. And so it is with Muslims and Christians living in India.

In Muslim-majority Malegaon in Fadnavis's state, police recently asked cattle-owners to provide photographs of their livestock for proper identification and effective implementation of the culling ban. Cattle-owners were also asked to provide a "guarantee letter" that they will take care of their bovines. Why not, ask other right-wing leaders. "After all," as BJP MP Yogi Adityanath puts it, "the cow is our *rashtra mata* (mother of the nation)."

Universal Saffronisation

A contrarian view on the Bisahra crime, as promoted by Tarun Vijay, the former editor of the RSS weekly *Panchajanya*—taking into account whether or not Akhlaq or his family had slaughtered the cow and consumed its meat, which itself is far from being established—is also being seen as faulty. The underlying suggestion is that, if the meat was beef, the killing could be "understood", if not justified.

But there is some disquiet in the RSS ranks, and its leaders say that they are trying to ensure the violence doesn't spill to other parts. "It is an unfortunate incident. The perpetrators should be punished as per the law.

However, such isolated incidents can't always be placed at the doorstep of the RSS," says National Prachar Pramukh Manmohan Vaidya, while adding: "There is a need for Muslims to come out in greater support of the faith 100 crore Hindus have in the cow. It is not enough that you are good, you should appear to be good."

Under Modi, the Gujarat government had a system to nip such tensions in the bud. Eight mobile forensic labs would do a on-the-spot test of the meat if a vehicle was apprehended on the suspension of transporting beef.

Though Finance Minister Arun Jaitley and Home Minister Rajnath Singh came out strongly against the Bisahra lynching, saying it "harmed India's image", Modi's continued silence is putting his own position as a global diplomat in danger, as also his vision for a progressive India that is open for business. He has steadfastly reinforced these ideas on numerous foreign visits, but in terms of social justice and cultural plurality, his government is in grave danger of giving in to an agenda set by the ultra right.

Evidence of this submission to the ideals of the RSS—which aims to create a "Hindu Rashtra" and a new "spiritual order" that will rejuvenate the "reservoir of knowledge" that went dry due to the creation of an "artificial culture" over 500 years of Mughal and British rule—is all around. A spate of cultural institutions have been taken over in recent months by those sympathetic to the Sangh or in sync with its line of reasoning. The appointments of Pahlaj Nihalani as CBFC chief, of Yellapragada Sudershan Rao as ICHR chief, and actor Gajendra Chauhan as the head of the FTII despite severe criticism from a majority of the peer groups in each of those fields, are examples of this. Sources now suggest that bodies such as CBSE, NCTE and National Archives are next on the Sangh's list for reform.

According to Rakesh Sinha, RSS ideologue and director of India Policy Foundation, this cultural and historical makeover is long overdue. "The RSS has been a victim of exclusion," he argues. "Those who are criticising

our appointments are indirectly saying that saffron ideologues should be excluded not only from government but also from independent research." Mahesh Sharma, meanwhile, has emerged as one of the principal proponents of cultural "cleansing". Along with making a series of controversial statements (including saying that former president APJ Abdul Kalam was a "great man who was a nationalist and a humanist, despite being a Muslim"), Sharma recently inaugurated an exhibition at Lalit Kala Akademi that dated various Hindu mythological events, despite the idea being dismissed by a multitude of serious historians.

Parallel Agenda

Taking a cue from the culture ministry, the HRD ministry, too, is working to launch a new education policy. According to sources, this process is being monitored by RSS Joint General Secretary Krishna Gopal, and will revolve around a broad framework created by the group that will "rid us of the corrupt education model thrust upon us by (Lord Thomas Babington) Macaulay". On September 18, Rajnath Singh said in Delhi's Shri Ram College of Commerce that India's pandits were more knowledgeable than NASA scientists and that if the US space agency could predict eclipses a month in advance, the pandits could predict them for the next 100 years by looking at '*panchang*' (Hindu calendar).

The process of writing new textbooks has already begun. In June, NCERT conducted a workshop for a review of history textbooks. This exercise has caused alarm among several academics. "They claim ancient science was so developed that we had stem-cell research, plastic surgery and aircraft way before the West. But none of this is supported by evidence. Lack of evidence can't be supported by history. Nor can it be explained as 'lost knowledge'. Since the Vedas still exist, where is this lost knowledge hiding?" asks historian D.N. Jha.

Another historian, Harbans Mukhia, adds that the RSS is homogenising history while the world is moving towards pluralism. "Religion,

HIGH-STEAK NATION

CONSUMPTION OF BEEF IS JUST 30 PER CENT UTILITY OF THE ANIMAL,
70 PER CENT OF THE CARCASS IS TRADED FOR OTHER PURPOSES

India exports beef to 65 countries, including Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and UAE. Vietnam consumes 40 per cent of Indian beef. As per the Ministry of Food Processing Industries, till March 31, 2014, India had 1,623 registered slaughterhouses in the country. At 316, Maharashtra had the highest number of slaughterhouses. There are 30,000 illegal slaughterhouses across the country, many of which allegedly slaughter cows.

Livestock Census

	2007	2012	Growth
Cattle	1,99,075,000	1,90,904,000	-4.1%
Buffalo	1,05,342,000	1,08,702,000	3.19%

India's beef exports*

Year	Quantity (MT)	Value
2012-13	11,07,506.24	Rs 17,412.89 crore
2013-14	14,49,758.64	Rs 26,457.81 crore
2014-15	14,75,526.01	Rs 29,282.58 crore



HORNS AND HOOFS

Jewellery, earrings, necklaces, combs, coat buttons; foam in fire extinguishers



SKIN

Leather is used in shoes, slippers, handbags, belts and other products. Gelatine is a byproduct used in jellies and other food products, in photography, as the coating for soluble capsules or bitter tablets



BLOOD

Serum made from cow's blood is used in haemoglobin and iron tonics, shoe-shining products and vaccines for pets



BONE

Soap, toothpaste and bone china products; bone powder is used to give extra sheen to sugar



TALLOW

Used to make khari biscuits flaky and crunchy

GLANDS

Used to produce Insulin, triptan, heparin and pepsin



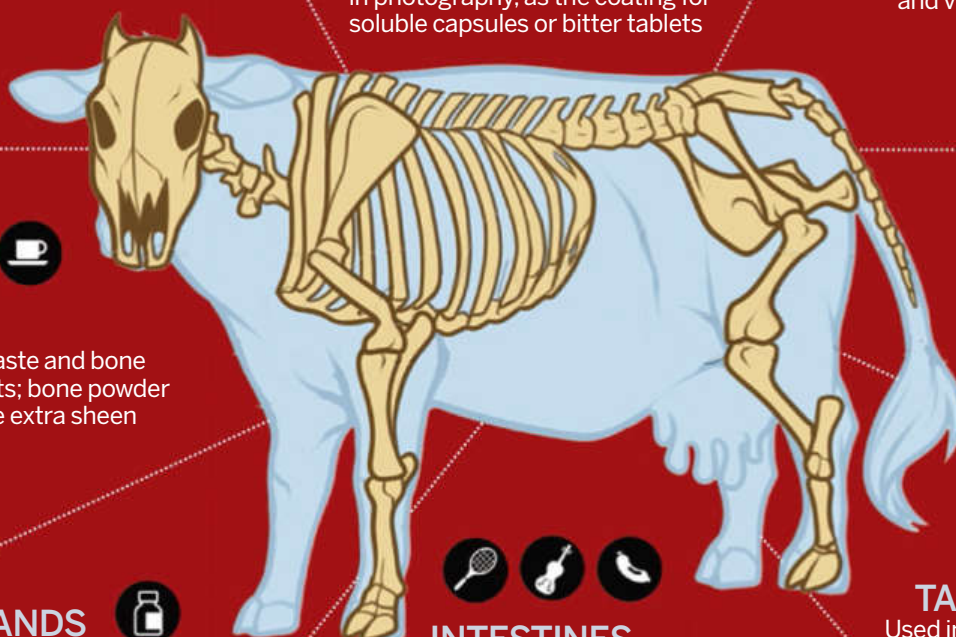
INTESTINES

Used in surgical stitches, for binding together sausages, to make badminton and tennis racquets, violin strings and other musical instruments



TAIL HAIR

Used in making paint brushes, dusters



*WATER BUFFALO

Source: Ministry of Agriculture; Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority

Guest column **GOPALKRISHNA GANDHI**

BENDING OF BELIEFS

We cannot coerce others to observe what we believe our religion and culture enjoin



I am not a Gandhian or an expert on Mahatma Gandhi. So what I would say in response to the question what Gandhi would have said or

done on the issue of cow slaughter today is that it is more important for us to ask what our common sense, our good sense, our sense of decency, or what is called 'sharafat' in Hindustani, says. Of course, Gandhi has said some amazingly clear and path-guiding things on the subject. So let me say just this that Gandhi was very clear: cow slaughter cannot be used as a weapon to beat the Muslims. His views—a Vaishnavite Hindu's views—on cow slaughter and beef were one thing, the question of cow slaughter on the political stage was altogether another. Using cow slaughter as a political message or a political statement or a political issue was, in his views, wrong, ethically and civilisationally. Cow slaughter, he saw very clearly, had a political voltage which is today being seen in all that has happened in the last few weeks. This sudden escalation on the issue of beef and on banning cow slaughter has little to do with the love for the cow. It has everything to do with the hatred for Muslims, contempt for Christians, and generally a kind of contempt for every minority community and indeed for the many, many Hindus of different categories who do not believe in not eating beef.

What we are up against is the issue of Indian republicanism, which Gandhi, B.R. Ambedkar and Jawaharlal Nehru fought for, and the majoritarianism, which is being unveiled and, in fact, unleashed today. There is an unmistakable family resemblance between the *ghar wapsi* programme, the killing of Narendra Dabholkar, Govind Pansare and M.M. Kalburgi, between a Union

minister's description of APJ Abdul Kalam as "a nationalist despite being a Muslim" and the demand for a ban on beef. There is a clear pattern emerging in all this. And that is what should worry us, not whether the Prime Minister is speaking or not speaking, not whether the Ministry of Home Affairs or the government of Uttar Pradesh has done the right thing or not. What we have to be really worried about, and it is not an ordinary worry, is what is troubling our very being as a civilisation that is also a nation. This can be felt as the deep anxiety of the soul, and the word 'soul' has been very correctly invoked by Pratap Bhanu Mehta in his recent article on these critical issues. What we need to think of is the commencement of a new kind of politics, an ugly politics, the politics of violence or intimidation that now surrounds us. This is seen, either as direct violence, murdering of people or supporting the lynching that has taken place in Dadri. Either that or the insidious backing of this culture of intimidation which wants the minorities, including the minority of dissent, to go silent.

Gandhi is not infallible, his was not the last word on any matter, but Gandhi spoke of what he felt very sincerely and earnestly and with the future of the people of India in heart. We cannot coerce others, those with religious and cultural beliefs other than ours, to observe what we believe our religion and culture enjoin. This is what he said.

We are now witnessing precisely that kind of coercing, compelling, steamrolling. And all this is meant to divide us, polarise us, for crass political gain. We are not just entering into a world of polarisation, we are being pushed into it, pummelled into it. And that is where I feel what the senior segment of our society, the bigger and the larger segment, says and does be-

comes very important. The Hindus of India are not just a majority community, they are in fact the signature of all that has led to the development of a plural and secular democracy in India, which means a civilised rule by the stronger as trustees of those that are not that strong, and not trustees in a patronising way, and not trustees in a way that the trust can be reversed and retracted but as a matter of faith, as a matter of principle. Our Constitution is not just a legal document, it is a document with a civilisational message. And today, what is at stake is the salvaging of the civilisational ingredients of the Constitution which have been left in it by its architects. There is a need to salvage that from the intimidatory possession of those who want to hijack something of its letter to kill its spirit. Majority democracy is very different from majoritarian rule and that is what we are now up against. Majoritarian rule, using the instruments of

NCP WORKERS STAGE A PROTEST IN MUMBAI AGAINST





The government must give solutions for environmental hazards, over-population, exports, and the impact on rural economy, while protecting the cow.

intimidation and plain bullying, including murder, is what we are up against.

Moderate voices of tolerance cannot wait to be empowered by anybody. Those voices have to be self-reliant and they have to be strong. During the worst days and weeks leading to Partition and Independence of India, the same events were witnessed on a huge scale. There was mass murder, there was frenzy and there was political extremism of every kind. There was intimidation, coercion, polarisation. And it would have been natural for anyone shocked and agonised by all that to imagine that India had collapsed. But India did not collapse. Gandhi and Nehru were out there with the traumatised people to calm their petrified nerves, their bereaved souls. But it was not just Gandhi or Nehru. Very simple people who were just regular citizens helped those in danger. Muslims helped Hindus and Sikhs and Hindus helped Muslims, and some gallant souls died for the cause, and it is that which made all the difference, that kept India and India's soul from collapsing. Let us not for-

get the work of women such as Mridula Sarabhai, Rameshwari Nehru and Aruna Asaf Ali, who saved women from danger at the hands of crazed men of all religions.

And after the mayhem, the voice of the steadfast moderate and the determined liberal prevailed. Partition took place but nonetheless, India as we know came to be founded from the embers of polarisation and Partition. It was founded on certain ethical principles. The Herculean and successful striving of this moderate-liberal during the great polarisations of 1946-47 is what holds out hope for us now and is what we are talking about. The moderate, the liberal, the person who wants civilised solutions to uncivilised situations is not a weak person who seeks help from here or there, least of all from the government, but the voice of tolerance and the voice of accommodation. It is an extremely strong and powerful voice. It is the voice of the committed and confident man and woman who does not want to shout out the opponent, but persuade him.

The cow has now been turned to a kind of a saviour of a political group. It is a desperate recourse, this turning, of all things, to the cow. But it is as dangerous as it is desperate. And so this is a time when we need to be sure that the voice of the moderate, the liberal of India, that has been proved to be strong in the past and is indeed a strong voice, is once again raised and prevails.

The agony of Mohammad Akhlaq's family shall not go to waste. Akhlaq's lynching is indeed a form of sacrifice to the cause of pluralism and republicanism in India. We will remember his sacrifice and it will keep guiding us and reminding us that tolerance and non-violence will finally prevail in India, which is a civilisation as well as a nation.

Gopalkrishna Gandhi is a distinguished professor of history and politics at Ashoka University

which is one of the variables in historiography, is being considered the only variable by organisations for whom the only emphasis is glorification of the Hindu past," says Mukhia. On October 6, writers Ashok Vajpeyi and Nayantara Sahgal returned their Sahitya Akademi Awards in protest. "India's culture of diversity and debate is under vicious assault," Sahgal said.

It is in this charged socio-political climate that the murder of Akhlaq has taken India from the brink of an ideological divide into a cauldron of religious division. With phrases such as *ghar wapsi* (conversion) and *love jihad* (marriage for conversion) in the air, the *hatya* (killing) of a suspected *gau hatyara* (cow killer) reveals a blatant hardening of positions. But the bigger questions are: are we a nation where the rule of law can be suspended for a religious vendetta, and where ethnic vigilantism places the rights of a cow over the fundamental rights of a human being? Being seen as such a country is the last thing that Modi, the universal development icon, would want.

The undercurrents of religious tension never did any country good—especially one that aims to grow at over 8 per cent for the next three years and to increase foreign investments while delivering manufacturing, skilling and urban migration to a large population without favour or discrimination. The dark alley in Bisahra today casts a grim shadow over India's glorious future. In a country with a history of sectarian violence, let it not be a throwback to an inglorious past.

with Uday Mahurkar and Asit Jolly



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THE LYNCHING OF MOHAMMAD AKHLAQ IN DADRI



PTI



CLOSE COMBAT



FOR BOTH NDA AND JANATA COMBINE, KEEPING VOTE BANKS BY THEIR SIDE IS AS CRITICAL AS WOOING NEW SECTIONS IN MAKE-OR-BREAK ELECTIONS

By Amitabh Srivastava

Narendra Modi, Prime Minister and also the unrivalled electoral mascot of the BJP, addressed four massive rallies in Bihar between July 25 and September 1. The fifth, an official, government event in Ara on August 18, where he announced a special package worth Rs 1.25 lakh crore for the state, also ended up becoming another public engagement showcasing the apparent generosity and possibilities of political homogeneity between the Centre and one of India's most backward states. But unusually, for a month from September 1, Modi stayed away from Bihar.

He was back in Banka in south east Bihar on October 2. The dates for the biggest political contest of 2015 had been announced and Modi wasted no time in pouncing on Nitish Kumar, a one-time-ally-turned-bitter-rival. The jabs and punches were unsparing as only Modi can land them. Nitish was accused of being arrogant to the extent of putting his attitude ahead of the state's interests. It was a typical Modi attack. But it was also something the Prime Minister had taken a break from after his initial forays into the state and switched to a statesman-like strategy of focusing on development and progress.

Something had changed in those four or five weeks. The battle for Bihar was always expected to be close although the BJP and its allies were assumed to have an edge following their sweep of the state in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections and the political circus that followed there. That edge was apparently growing thinner. Blame it on the jostling for tickets in the NDA, the public sulking of allies or the politically damaging comments on reservations by the RSS chief, the BJP, it seems, needed to employ newer political tactics and rhetoric in equal measure to hold on to its ground. And so Modi was back barnstorming the state and doing what he does best—taking potshots at Nitish and his ally Lalu Prasad Yadav and promising to transform Bihar if the NDA is voted to power.

That the mood on the ground is volatile is backed by the second India Today Group-Cicero Poll. From closely trailing the NDA in both vote projection and the number of seats in the first survey in September, the Janata Dal (United)-Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) alliance has overtaken its rival by a thin margin in the second survey conducted in October. It is projected to secure a majority literally by a whisker of one seat in a house of 243 (*see survey charts*). The poll survey shows the BJP losing its edge to the JD(U) alliance among rural and urban voters, caste

groups and among the youth. The BJP has increased its popularity among its traditional voters, the upper castes, but has not been able to breach the JD(U) bastions: the backward castes, Mahadalits and Muslims. The JD(U) has consolidated its hold among its caste supporters even as it has seen a marginal dip in its popularity among the young voters. But here again, it is still ahead of the BJP which has seen a steeper fall. The BJP's popularity among urban voters has dipped while the JD(U) has increased its ratings. But it is still anybody's game, and it isn't over until the last votes are cast and counted. No wonder both sides are deploying all their resources and more to win every winnable vote in Bihar.

On the face of it, this is just another assembly election in a key heartland state. It will not make or break the political fortunes of the party in power at the Centre. Neither can it be regarded as a referendum on the performance of the 15-month-old central government of Modi, notwithstanding the desperate attempts of the opposition and critics to portray it as one. But you wouldn't get that impression if you tracked the manner in which BJP President Amit Shah is marshalling his forces in the state and the time and energy Modi is giving to this election.

For Shah, battleground Bihar is the perfect opportunity to prove the Delhi



Illustration by SAURABH SINGH

VOTE PROJECTION

THE JD(U)-LED ALLIANCE IS INCHING AHEAD

	ASSEMBLY 2010	TRACKER POLL SEPTEMBER 2015	TRACKER POLL OCTOBER 2015	SWING
JD(U)+*	49.8%	40%	41%	-8.8%
BJP+**	23.2%	42%	39%	15.8%
Others	27%	18%	20%	-7%

* JD(U)+includes JD(U), RJD and INC

** BJP+ includes BJP, LJP, RLSP and HAMS

SEAT PROJECTION

FOR THE BJP, IT'S A CHANCE TO CREATE HISTORY

	ASSEMBLY 2010	TRACKER POLL SEPTEMBER 2015	TRACKER POLL OCTOBER 2015
JD(U)+*	141	106	122
BJP+**	94	125	111
Others	8	12	10

* JD(U)+includes JD(U), RJD and INC

** BJP+ includes BJP, LJP, RLSP and HAMS



INDIA TODAY-CICERO BIHAR POLL

PEOPLE ARE ROOTING FOR DEVELOPMENT AND NOT CASTE-BASED POLITICS, AND A STRONG LEADERSHIP THAT

Who should be the next chief minister of Bihar?

NITISH KUMAR **38** 29

SUSHIL KUMAR MODI **22** 19

LALU PRASAD YADAV **9** 12

RAM VILAS PASWAN **4** 7

JITAN RAM MANJHI **6** 6

● OCTOBER

● SEPTEMBER

Rest: Others/
can't say
All figures in %



How will you rate the performance of Nitish Kumar as Bihar CM?

ABOVE EXPECTATION **28**

MEETS EXPECTATION **28**

BELOW EXPECTATION **28**

Rest: Don't know/
can't say
All figures in %

56% say Bihar has witnessed tremendous development during Nitish Kumar's 10-year rule

66% SAY
DYNASTY
POLITICS IS
STRENGTHENING
ITS HOLD IN BIHAR

59% SAY
MUSCLE-MONEY
POWER WILL
PLAY A BIG ROLE
IN THE ELECTIONS

54% FEEL BIHAR
WILL BENEFIT IF
THE GOVERNMENT
AT CENTRE AND IN
STATE ARE RUN BY
THE SAME PARTY

42% SAY
JUNGLE RAJ
STILL EXISTS
IN BIHAR

How has the Narendra Modi government performed in the past 15 months?

ABOVE EXPECTATION **26**

MEETS EXPECTATION **32**

BELOW EXPECTATION **32**

Rest: Others/don't
know/can't say
All figures in %



What is your opinion on Modi making several promises to the people of Bihar?

WILL FULFIL HIS PROMISES TO BIHAR **38**

WILL DISCRIMINATE **29**

Rest: Don't know/can't say
All figures in %

39% people feel the NDA alliance is best suited to ensure the development of Bihar

Which issue will influence voting during the elections?

CASTE	16
LEADERSHIP	11
RELIGION	4
DEVELOPMENT	29
LAW AND ORDER	9
BETTER EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES	20

Rest: Don't know/can't say
All figures in %

METHODOLOGY

The India Today-Cicero Bihar RCS Tracker Poll (Wave-II) was conducted by Cicero Associates & Consultants Private Limited. As part of the project, a unique Rolling Cross Section (RCS) poll was designed, spreading across two independent waves. Each wave was a cross-section sample survey of Bihar's electorate, covering the entire demographic and geographical spread of the state. The two waves of the RCS Tracker Poll followed a multistage stratified random sample design. Out of 243 assembly constituencies in Bihar, 81 were covered. The respondents were selected from the official electoral rolls. The survey was conducted in compliance with standard international practices of election studies by field investigators trained in data collection methods.

assembly result as a freak accident, burnish his position in the party as the tactician with the midas touch and seal a second term as the head of the party in December-January. For Modi, it is not only about revisiting the wave that swept the country in the summer of 2014 but also about seeking a stamp of approval for his governance and marching towards a political footprint that covers large parts of the country and allows him to push his policies with ease at the Centre and in the states. So much so that Modi has not hesitated to pit himself directly against Nitish without the luxury of a local leader as cushion, and the campaign is ending up flagging issues unrelated to the state—from Modi's foreign travels to Hardik Patel's quota campaign in Gujarat and his support for Nitish.

The stakes for Nitish and Lalu are equally high, if not higher. The battle for Bihar, 2015, is not just about power in Patna but also their own political relevance and survival. From being Lalu's Chanakya in the 1980s and early 1990s to emerging on his own and ruling the state for almost an entire decade from 2005, Nitish is living a political irony in 2015. His gambit of walking out of the NDA in 2013 opposing Modi's elevation as the PM candidate, coupled with his record of good governance, was supposed to position him as the tallest leader in Bihar. That strategy boomeranged and the JD(U) came a cropper in the Lok Sabha polls, forcing Nitish to respond favourably to Lalu's overtures for an alliance. October 2015 will put that decision to the test. Nitish could either emerge as the master strategist or go down as a political gambler who played a risky game with Bihar's complex caste equations.

Lalu, who is on bail, cannot contest elections following his 2013 conviction in a fodder scam case. Wife Rabri Devi also seems to have lost her appetite for electoral politics after her crushing defeats in two assembly seats in 2010 and in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls. Clearly not averse to putting his family interest above that of his party,



BIHAR BJP'S WOMEN CELL MEMBERS WITH LOTUS SYMBOL ON THEIR HANDS IN PATNA

THE BJP'S HOPE RESTS ON EXPOSING FAULT LINES IN THE JANATA ALLIANCE, WARNING VOTERS THAT A VOTE FOR THE PARIVAR WILL HELP LALU IMPOSE 'JUNGLE RAJ II'.

the 2015 assembly polls seem to be Lalu's last opportunity to pass on his political legacy to his two inexperienced sons, Tej Pratap and Tejaswi

Historian Romila Thapar describes the history of ancient India as the history of ancient Bihar. Many of India's achievements in education, governance, society or religion, she says, have their roots in Bihar. But that was centuries ago. Contemporary Bihar, in terms of output or on the human development index or on parameters of access to infrastructure, health-care, education and law and order has been behind all major states in India. In an analysis of the state, Arnab Mukherji, associate professor, Centre for Public Policy, Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore, talks about the three phases of Bihar. The pre-bifurcation economy, the post-bifurcation economy (period between 2000 and 2005) and the phase which started after the 2005 elections when Nitish came to power at the head of a JD(U)-BJP coalition.

During this third phase, Bihar witnessed major changes in policy, administration and overall governance as well as rapid economic growth, says



INDIA TODAY—CICERO BIHAR POLL

THE BJP IS LOSING ITS EDGE TO THE JD(U) ALLIANCE AMONG RURAL-URBAN VOTERS, CASTE GROUPS AND THE YOUTH

VOTE BY CASTE/ COMMUNITY

The BJP has increased its popularity among the upper castes while the JD(U) has consolidated its hold among the backward castes, Mahadalits and Muslims



CASTE/COMMUNITY	JD(U)+		BJP+		OTHERS	
BRAHMIN	18	8	70	78	12	14
THAKUR /RAJPUT	20	17	70	70	10	13
BHUMIHAR	16	18	77	77	7	5
OTHER UPPER CASTES	35	25	52	58	13	17
AHIR/YADAV	62	64	27	15	11	21
KURMI/KOERI	42	43	34	38	24	19
OTHER OBC	34	40	43	34	23	26
MAHADALITS	33	39	49	54	18	7
OTHER DALITS	29	36	54	50	17	14
MUSLIMS	65	70	15	14	20	16
OTHERS	36	27	43	27	21	46

VOTE BY AGE GROUP

The JD(U) has seen a marginal dip in its popularity among young voters but is still ahead of the BJP which has seen a sharp drop



AGE GROUP	JD(U)+		BJP+		OTHERS	
YOUNG (UP TO 25)	39	38	43	36	18	26
MIDDLE AGED (26 TO 55)	40	42	42	41	18	17
OLD (56 & ABOVE)	40	41	41	37	19	22

RURAL-URBAN VOTERS

The BJP has seen a dip in its popularity among urban voters while the JD(U) has increased its ratings



LOCALITY	JD(U)+		BJP+		OTHERS	
RURAL	41	41	41	39	18	20
URBAN	33	40	48	41	19	19

● SEPTEMBER 2015 ● OCTOBER 2015

Rest: Others/ can't say All figures in %



(FROM LEFT) NARENDRA MODI WITH RAM VILAS PASW

Mukherji. “The period makes a clear break from the past, in both statistical and qualitative sense,” he says. “An average person in Bihar was making 30 per cent of what a person was making in India. Nitish reduced the gap. You see measurable gains for an average Bihari after decades of neglect.”

The bifurcation of Bihar impacted the state's growth. The new state, Jharkhand, inherited three-fourths of all assets and picked up only a fourth of all liabilities. The bifurcation was a huge setback for industry that constituted 24 per cent of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) for an undivided Bihar and 4 per cent for a divided Bihar. Bihar's economy became more dependent on agriculture and prone to shocks—droughts or heavy rains.

But Bihar's economy saw a U-turn of sorts after the 2005 elections. The compounded annual growth rate for Bihar between 2005 and 2010 was 8.6 per cent while India grew at 7.04 per cent. Experts give particular credit to Nitish for expanding roads and bridges even though Bihar still lags behind the national average. Bihar's transition has been noteworthy but will the state be able to sustain and grow? Analysts Arnab Mukherji and Anjan Mukherji, professor emeritus at Centre for Economic Studies and Planning, JNU, argue that the lack of a strong leadership, absence of employable candidates and vocational training could take the Bihar story back very quickly.

It appears like a platform built to order for Nitish, and by extension, Lalu. But one which seems to be getting drowned in the noise of rhetoric and headline-grabbing soundbites. Barely one week before the first phase



AN AND JITAN RAM MANJHI AT A RALLY IN BANKA, BIHAR

PTI

of polling, both key players are spending more time talking about caste and the beef controversy. "Hindus eat beef," Lalu first said. And then tried to control the damage by blaming his statement on a "devil which put the words in his mouth". It was the perfect diversion for BJP leaders struggling to dilute the import of the RSS chief's comments against caste quotas.

Little wonder then that Nitish's alliance with Lalu—whose rule of Bihar is infamously referred to as 'jungle raj'—is seen as a double-edged sword.

Lalu's Yadav caste is estimated to account for 14 per cent of Bihar's population and the alliance is expected to win Nitish a substantial chunk of votes from that group. But JD(U) insiders also fear that Lalu's reputation could scare away some of Nitish's supporters from other communities.

Nitish seems to be aware of that danger. It explains why JD(U) billboards and posters talk only about his credentials as a man of good governance. The attempt is to turn the poll into a referendum on Nitish's

performance. And since everyone in Bihar acknowledges that the state has made progress under Nitish, the move gives the JD(U) an advantage to start with.



The BJP's hope rests on exposing the fault lines in the Janata alliance. Every senior leader in the BJP—from Amit Shah to Sushil Modi—has repeatedly warned voters that a vote for the grand secular alliance will help Lalu impose "jungle raj II" in Bihar. Although Modi has focused more on development issues after aggressively attacking Lalu and Nitish in his initial rallies in Bihar, his strategy to connect Lalu with Nitish has pushed the BJP to mainly target Lalu.

The BJP strategy also rests on the premise that the sizeable Extremely Backward Castes (EBC), opposed to the Yadavs, may turn against the Janata alliance. The idea is to expose the social chasm and capitalise on the mistrust prevalent among the other backward communities to blunt Lalu's plan to transform the election into a simple 'forward versus backward' contest.



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Back in May 2009, after the BJP-JD(U) alliance won 32 of the 40 Lok Sabha seats in Bihar, Nitish had poked fun at the rival alliance of Lalu and Ram Vilas Paswan saying they had acted like confused teachers, making a group of schoolboys jump into a raging river, hoping that they will cross just because the average height of the group was higher than the average depth of the river. "No wonder, many of them drowned," Nitish had said. It was a smart analogy, alluding to the RJD and Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) chiefs' pronounced dependence on caste-based calculations.

After the drubbing he received five years later, Nitish did precisely what he had criticised Lalu and Paswan for. A quick caste and vote calculation later, he joined hands with Lalu to fight these assembly elections. As the picture became clearer, a back-of-the-envelope calculation showed the BJP-led NDA, now without the JD(U) but with Paswan, had bagged 31 of 40 seats and 36.48 per cent (BJP 29.86 per cent) of the vote pie. But it was still far short of the 45.06 per cent polled by the current Janata Parivar members.

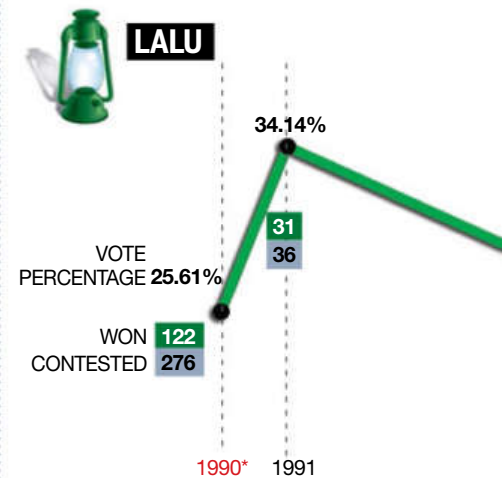
On paper, the JD(U)-RJD-Congress alliance's combined vote share—49.83 per cent—was even more impressive in the 2010 assembly polls. But elections are not won on paper. For one, Upendra Kushwaha's Rashtriya Lok Samata Party (RLSP) and Jitan Ram Manjhi's Hindustani Awam Morcha-Secular (HAMS) did not even exist in 2010. In fact, HAMS was not on

anyone's mind even last summer. The party's chief, Manjhi, then a docile minister in the Nitish cabinet, had contested the Lok Sabha polls on a JD(U) ticket. He not only lost but forfeited his deposit. The crushing defeat ostensibly convinced Nitish that Manjhi posed no threat and thus made the Mahadalit leader his temporary successor. It was, of course, an experiment that boomeranged badly on Nitish and effectively made Manjhi a martyr among many Scheduled Caste (SC) communities, which account for 18.44 per cent of Bihar's electorate.

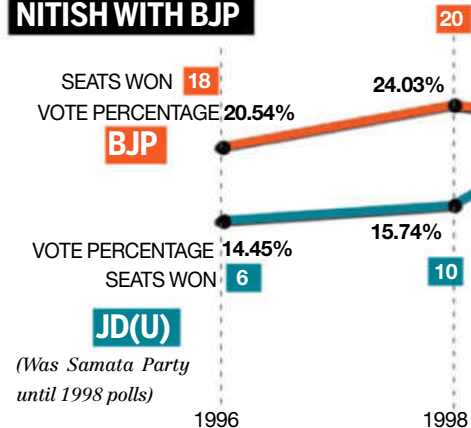
The Janata Parivar's fate hangs also on their ability to ensure micro-level reconciliation of traditional vote banks—the Yadavs and the EBCs—that have behaved antagonistically in elections over the last two decades. It is a double-edged sword for both alliances. Going by his track record, Lalu had failed to convince supporters to vote for his then ally, the LJP, in 2009 and 2010. And he is unlikely to find it any easier to transfer Yadav votes en masse to JD(U) and Congress candidates in 142 seats. Nitish too might have a tough time persuading his supporters to vote for Lalu's candidates.

Similarly, almost a fifth of the Yadav voters are believed to have pressed the button for NDA during the Modi wave of 2014. They may return to Lalu now, as regional parties have traditionally performed better in assembly elections. Another factor that might play a significant role is the rebellion in the RJD and the JD(U). Both parties are

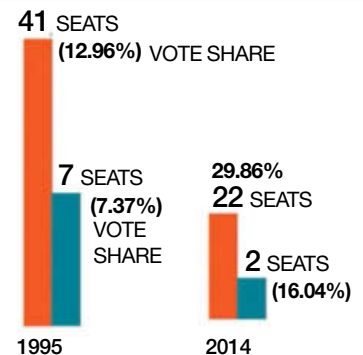
NUMBERS GAME WHILE LALU



NITISH WITH BJP



NITISH WITHOUT BJP (LOK SABHA)



* Years marked in red denote Assembly polls while those in black denote Lok Sabha polls

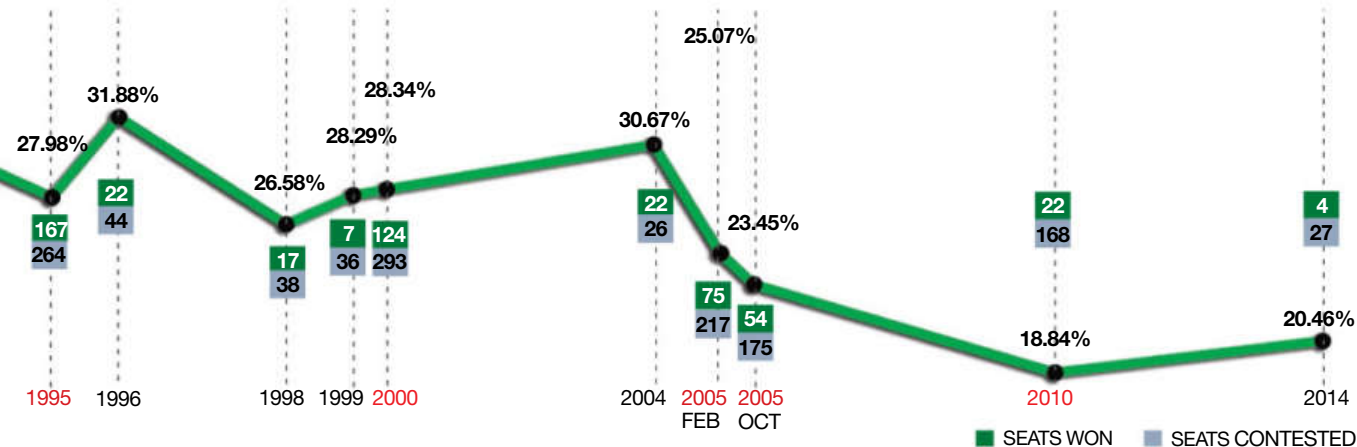
JD(U) LEADER NITISH KUMAR WITH RJD SUPREMO LALU PRASAD YADAV AT A RALLY IN PATNA



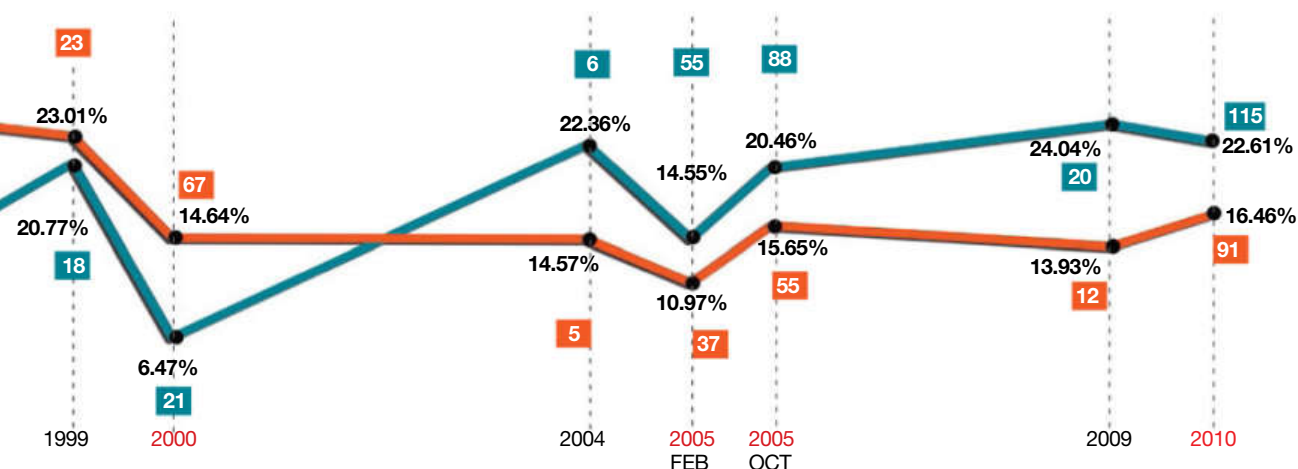
RANJAN RAHI

U'S FORTUNES HAVE DIPPED OVER THE YEARS, NITISH'S HAVE GROWN ON THE PLANK OF GROWTH

When it comes to Assembly polls, Lalu's fortune has been on the downside. From 27.98% in 1995, his vote share fell to 18.84% in 2010. But despite being a regional party, over the years, RJD's vote share has registered an increase in the Lok Sabha polls.

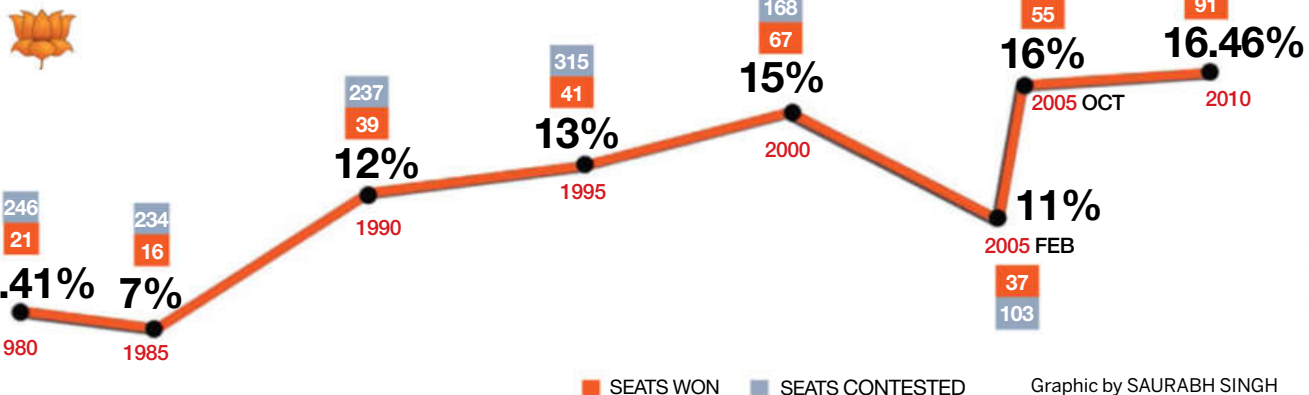


Nitish's fortune has been on an upswing ever since he joined hands with BJP in Bihar in 1996 which ultimately culminated in his becoming the chief minister. But without BJP's support, be it 1995 Assembly polls or 2014 Lok Sabha polls, Nitish failed to impress.



BJP's performance in Bihar has seen an almost continuous upswing. Although the BJP had to concede a chunk of seats to alliance partner Nitish after Bihar's bifurcation in November 2000, it registered a constant increase in the vote share in subsequent Assembly polls.

BJP GROWTH IN BIHAR



Graphic by SAURABH SINGH



NECK AND NECK

HOW BIHAR'S BIGWIGS FARE AGAINST EACH OTHER AHEAD OF THE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS



STRENGTH



WEAKNESS

NITISH KUMAR



His clean image and goodwill among people for scripting Bihar's turnaround make him the most acceptable face for the post of CM.

He has never single-handedly secured any significant electoral victory. He lacks a formidable caste-based electoral support.

LALU PRASAD YADAV



With a majority of the Yadavs, Bihar's single-largest caste group, still behind Lalu Yadav, the RJD boss has considerable sway among backward class voters and Muslims.

Infamous for putting family before party—a trait which may dissuade educated voters. Convicted in fodder scam, Lalu cannot contest election.

SUSHIL MODI



Considered a possible frontrunner to be NDA's CM candidate, Sushil Modi has a clean image. He is known for being a master strategist and a popular street fighter.

The former deputy chief minister will have to compete with several hopefuls for the top job in Bihar.

RAM VILAS PASWAN



Ram Vilas Paswan has a proven political utility of transferring nearly 4.5% Paswan votes to whoever he allies with, the reason why BJP has given him maximum seats among allies.

Despite being in politics for long, Paswan has a limited catchment area. Due to his continued dependence on senior alliance partners, he can at most be a facilitator.

JITAN RAM MANJHI



Despite a brief term as CM, Manjhi has earned goodwill among people, thanks to his government's pro-Dalit decisions, replacing Paswan as Bihar's tallest Dalit leader.

Unlike BJP's other alliance partners, Manjhi is electorally untested, therefore joining hands with him may backfire if he fails to polarise Dalit voters.



OPPORTUNITY

Being the chief ministerial face of his alliance with Lalu Yadav and the Congress, Nitish can transform the assembly polls into a referendum and secure a win.

With Nitish and the Congress aligning with Lalu, the RJD boss can secure a decent showing this time. A victory in Bihar can help him pass on the baton to his sons.

Having expanded his party's social support base, Modi is at the cusp of making history with a chance to form the first BJP-led government in Bihar.

If Paswan repeats his Lok Sabha poll performance—when the LJP bagged 6 of the 7 seats it contested—he can be in a position to dictate terms to the next government.

Playing victim after being ousted by Nitish, Manjhi has a real opportunity to turn the hurt Dalit pride into a major issue for the numerically significant Dalit voters.



THREAT

Although alliance partner Lalu is likely to bring Yadav votes to the table, his overpowering presence can offset the advantage by alienating other social groups.

In an alliance, Lalu runs the risk of being marginalised further. His caste group, Yadavs, may not support JD(U) candidates.

The coming together of Lalu Yadav and Nitish Kumar will give Janata Parivar an ab initio advantage in terms of vote statistics.

Having distributed tickets to relatives, including brother and nephew, he faces a risk of a backlash from his committed cadres.

Nitish, who is seen as having done much for the Mahadalits, is snapping at Manjhi's heels for Dalit votes. Within the NDA, Manjhi faces a direct challenge from Paswan.

contesting 101 seats each, leaving 41 for the Congress. This has made several sitting legislators turn rebels after being denied tickets. Most of these expectants went to the new third front, comprising Mulayam Singh Yadav's Samajwadi Party, the Nationalist Congress Party, Pappu Yadav's Jan Adhikar Party, National People's Party, Samras Samaj Party, and the Samajwadi Janata Dal. The big guns went to the NDA.

The challenge for Lalu and Nitish thus is to stop the exodus of traditional votes in the seats they have left for each other's candidates. Lalu's clout in the seat-sharing arrangement looks pronounced. The RJD chief made the JD(U) forego seats it won in 2010, such as Raghapur and Mahua—where RJD has fielded Tejaswi and Tej Pratap, respectively. There are several such instances, but in return, the RJD has conceded only one seat it won the last time—Babubarhi in Madhubani district—to JD(U). Whether the supporters of the rebellious local JD(U) leaders switch allegiance or stay back with Nitish is a key question that will decide the fate of several contestants.

The BJP is not without its share of problems. Even as Shah directs the final stages of the campaign from his Patna war-room, the party is caught in the middle of some fire-fighting to keep rebels under control, as also to win back a section of cadres after ticket distribution caused heartburn.

With Nitish staring at a double-incumbency—his own 10 years and carrying the yoke of Lalu-Rabri's 15-year perceived “jungle raj”—state BJP leaders are also smacking their lips in anticipation at what they call the Nitish-Lalu duo's tactical error: leaving as many as 41 seats for the Congress. In 2010, the Congress had contested all 243 seats and won four. “This time the scorecard reads 41-0 even before votes are polled,” says BJP spokesperson Devesh Kumar. In an election expected to be mighty close otherwise, a lot of calculations may come undone if that turns out to be the case.

with Shweta Punj

Follow the writer on Twitter @Amitabh1975

ENEMY AT THE GATES

The first city to be captured by mujahideen in 1988, Kunduz is the first to fall—again. Although won back since, Kabul now seeks outside help to keep the Taliban at bay.

By Jyoti Malhotra

For the first time since the United States liberated Afghanistan from the Taliban in November 2001, the enemy is back. It slipped into the northern Afghan town of Kunduz, strategically located at the gateway to Central Asia, on September 28 without much resistance, and has since melted back into the hills that surround the city. Afghan forces, supported by US special forces on the ground and in the air, have recaptured most of Kunduz, but gory, unconfirmed reports of beheadings and other cruelly inflicted injuries continue to emerge.

Once again, this part of inner Asia is in turmoil. The Americans, weary from their 14-year-long war in Afghanistan and desperate to return home, have drawn down their troops in Afghanistan to about 10,000—clearly, the Taliban are getting their impetus from the fact that the field will soon be clear. The Chinese, the new big power in Asia, watch warily as Afghanistan's leadership increasingly confronts Pakistan with charges of complicity in the worsening situation. The Pakistanis point fingers at India. New Delhi dismisses the allegations, pointing out that all its aid to Afghanistan has been non-lethal, purely economic and project-driven.

But the overwhelming fear that Kunduz could be a forerunner of worse things to come, has begun to settle on Afghanistan. Already, Warduj district in neighbouring Badakshan has been taken by the Taliban. Several districts in Faryab province in north-west Afghanistan fell to militants in July, but were subsequently retaken by local militias. In the eastern province of Nangarhar, an Islamic State affiliate has occupied seven districts, while

the Taliban overran two districts in Helmand in the south. Afghan officials confirm that the truck bombing outside the Kabul military camp in August was the handiwork of the Haqqani network, which had carried out the blast in 2008 and the May attack on the Kabul Park Palace hotel, which killed several Indians.

A rambunctious city by day, fear and nervousness begins to grip Kabul,

the Afghan capital, as the sun begins to set. Over the last 14 years as Kabulis picked up the pieces from the various insurgencies of the previous decades, especially the horrifying Taliban years from 1996 to 2001, they succeeded in creating a semblance of normalcy that circumscribe their lives today. Children have gone back to school, women go to work in droves and the shops are full.

**AFGHAN NATIONAL ARMY TROOPS
KEEP WATCH AT A CHECKPOINT
IN CHARDARA DISTRICT OF
KUNDUZ PROVINCE IN JUNE 2015**



But scratch the surface, and the fear appears. The lines at the passport office are always long. Barely a week after Kunduz, Taliban suicide bombers blew themselves up next to the Russian embassy in Kabul. Perhaps they were reminding the population of August 14, 1988, when Kunduz was the first major city to fall as the Soviet Red Army withdrew from Afghanistan.

In some ways, the fall and recapture of Kunduz has allowed Afghans to give voice to their worst fears. Political leaders as well as ordinary civilians in Kabul and Herat in western Afghanistan, where a conference on security issues organised by the Afghan Institute of Strategic Studies on October 2-3 brought participants from all over the region, talk much more openly about the

“threat from the Pakistani establishment” in instigating as well as arming the Taliban.

Afghan officials told INDIA TODAY that a Lashkar-e-Taiba militant has been killed in Kunduz fighting, and that along with Chechens and Uzbeks “Punjabi militants” have been fighting alongside the Taliban. Asked where the Punjabis could be from, one Afghan official said, “Well, they can’t be from Mali,” implying that they were from the Pakistani side of Punjab.

At the Herat conference, in fact, the open criticism of the so-called Pakistani hand in Afghanistan’s troubles became so bad—Afghan participants even accused Pakistan of keeping the death of Taliban chief Mullah Omar a secret for two years and nurturing the new chief, Mullah

Akhtar Mansour—that a Pakistani participant protested the “Pakistan-bashing” at the conference.

None other than Afghanistan’s President Ashraf Ghani, seen to be close to the US as well as Pakistan when he took over a year ago, told journalists soon after Kunduz fell that “this war is imposed on us, and we are engaged with a two-faced enemy”. Even as recently as early this year, Ghani had given the go-ahead for a memorandum of understanding between NDS, the Afghan intelligence agency, and Pakistan’s ISI.

Afghanistan’s defence minister Masoom Stanekzai was more eloquent, telling CNN-IBN, “I think we should not have any doubts. This kind of fighting cannot be conducted without the support of any foreign elements. They are there, they are helping them, and they are supporting them.”

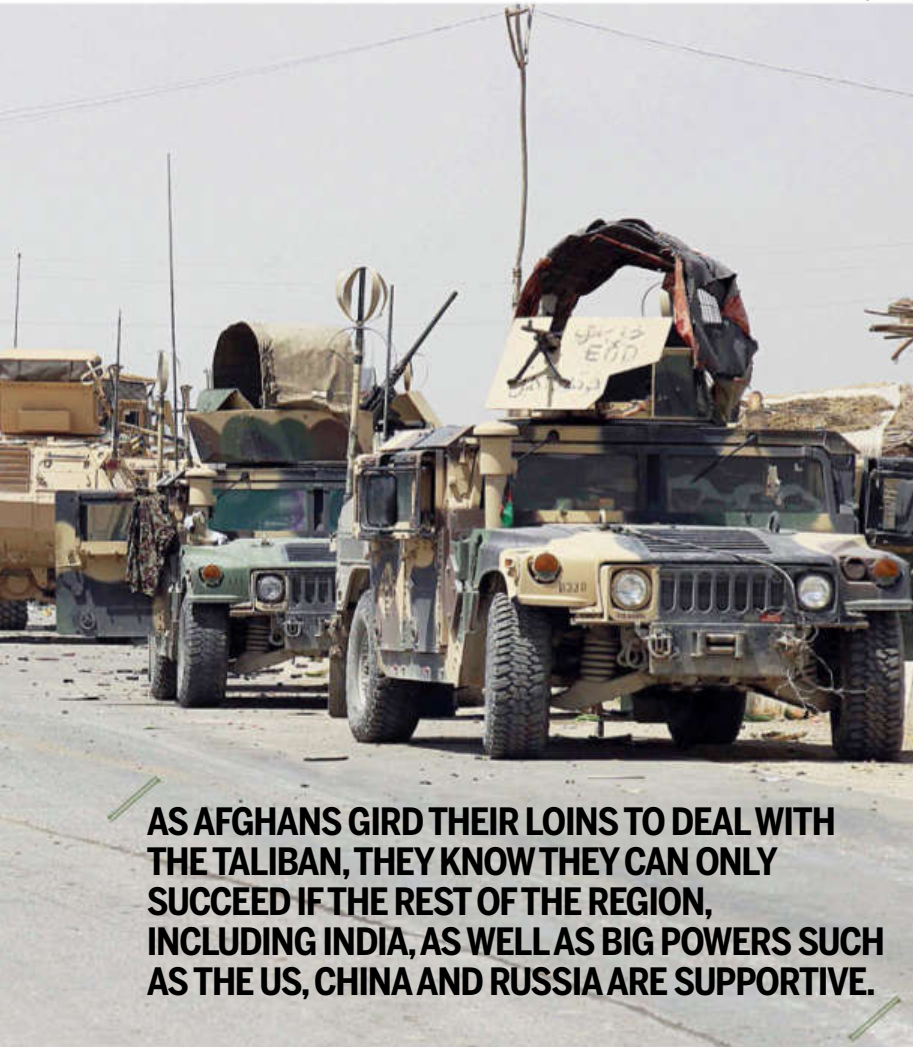
The division of power at the helm in Kabul has certainly led to some confusion on how to deal with the insurgency. Ghani and the country’s CEO, Abdullah Abdullah, infamously don’t get along, which means there is no unanimity in handling the security situation. Ghani’s nominee in Kunduz, Governor Omar Safi, was supposed to have treated the people who came to see him terribly—evidently, guard dogs were used to search people. When Kunduz fell, Safi was ostensibly away on a holiday. He has since been replaced by his deputy, Abdullah’s man.

As Afghans gird their loins to deal with the Taliban, they know they can succeed only if the rest of the region, including India, as well as big powers such as the US, China and Russia, are supportive. Even if the US stalls its own pullout, the Chinese continue to remain circumspect about military aid. As for India, an unwillingness to be drawn into a war not of its own making, has been holding Delhi back. Still, it may have to revisit the decision in the near future.

Follow the writer on Twitter @jomalhotra

The writer was invited to the country by the Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies

REUTERS



AS AFGHANS GIRD THEIR LOINS TO DEAL WITH THE TALIBAN, THEY KNOW THEY CAN ONLY SUCCEED IF THE REST OF THE REGION, INCLUDING INDIA, AS WELL AS BIG POWERS SUCH AS THE US, CHINA AND RUSSIA ARE SUPPORTIVE.

GREEN GROWTH ON INDIA'S

The government lays down a roadmap for industry on plans and commitments ahead of the

By Prachi Bhuchar

Every summer, as India's biggest cities resort to 'load shedding' to keep pace with the demand for power, its residents cuss and sweat, waiting for the comforting whirr of the fan and the hum of the air conditioner that allows them to stay insulated from the reality that millions of others live with—a life without electricity. As our society transforms and

our cities get more and more attractive to migrants seeking 'the good life', our urbanisation experiment gets impetus. Everyone wants to be on the grid and some, like those in Dharnai village in Bihar, get to do so by harnessing the flood of sunshine that defines their lives for most of the year. Dharnai became India's first solar-powered village in July last year, literally lighting up the lives of people here who only knew life in the dark. That's the India

story, one of the changing dynamics that renewable energy brings with it, turning lives around and allowing people to be part of the new green growth story. And that is the fulcrum on which India's Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC) rest, as it shares its plans and commitments, going into the Paris climate summit this December.

This is a crucial year for climate diplomacy with the Conference of

INDIA'S CLIMATE PLAN With a focus on renewable energy, the government wants to push the country on

India is one of the world's top four polluters with per capita emissions at **2.44 metric tonnes**

It plans to reduce its emissions intensity by **33-35 per cent** by 2030

Renewables will account for **40 per cent** of its energy mix by 2030

\$2.5 trillion, the amount required to fulfill India's climate change actions between now and 2030

Source: World Resources Institute Report



MIND

Paris climate summit

Parties in Paris being seen as key in drumming up a global outcome. This is also the deadline by which a new agreement to succeed the contentious Kyoto Protocol is to be put in place. Experts say the world needs an equitable climate agreement that will limit global temperature rise to below the 2°C mark, or else the results will be catastrophic, as is already being witnessed in vulnerable pockets around the world. This time though, the dialogue

AFP

a low carbon path

Plans to create an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent through afforestation by 2030



WORKERS INSTALL SOLAR PANELS IN JODHPUR

has shifted to what each country can put on the table in the form of pledges of INDC rather than just put absolute reduction figures.

In the INDC that were shared with the UN climate secretariat in September, India spelt out its three-pronged plan—focus on reducing emission intensity by 33 per cent-35 per cent by 2030 from 2005 levels, a strong renewable energy programme with 40 per cent of its electricity from non-fossil fuels by 2030, and creation of a carbon sink that has the capacity to sequester 2.5 billion-3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide through afforestation. While the plan seems ambitious and a step in the right direction, how does India plan to achieve this through its existing and new policies and programmes? As Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar said while releasing the document in New Delhi, “This is a clarion call for climate justice for both poor countries and poor people. We are not part of the problem but we want to be part of the solution.”

LOWER EMISSIONS INTENSITY

India's economy is growing rapidly, yet almost 50 per cent of the country remains to be urbanised and millions don't even have access to electricity. So, the INDC reflect this paradox and are framed in terms of reduction in emissions intensity rather than absolute emissions like say the US or the European Union. China, like India, has announced emission intensity cuts and a peaking year, given the focused development path it is currently on.

Emissions intensity is the amount of greenhouse gases emitted per unit of GDP. While India's commitment focuses on cutting emissions intensity in 2030 to a third below 2005 levels, the fact that it still has to grow means there is no running away from rising emissions during this period of development. According to Navroz Dubash, senior fellow, Centre for Policy Research, “The emissions intensity target is conservative when benchmarked against modelling studies and is roughly consistent with India's Cancun pledge for 2020 and suggests that the real action lies in sectoral measures. The real benchmark for

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India's INDC is whether it can avoid a lock-in to a high-carbon future."

And industry seems to agree. "What India has agreed to is to reduce the energy intensity, and not energy use, and that is achievable," says J.J. Irani, former MD of Tata Steel. "India is a developing nation, and all development requires energy. However, by 2030, we have committed to lower energy intensity by 33 per cent, meaning that we will take 33 per cent lesser energy to make something, compared to making it today."

FOCUS ON RENEWABLES

While the INDC spells out that coal will continue to dominate power generation in future, one of the biggest takeaways from the current pledge is India's very ambitious renewables plan. In order to stay on the current growth trajectory, India has no choice but to expand quickly, give its people access to basics such as electricity, and be sustainable while doing so. The renewables pie just got bigger as India stated that it will increase solar capacity to roughly 100 GW, double its wind capacity to 60 GW by 2022 and increase nuclear capacity to 63 GW by 2030. The idea is to install 175 GW of electricity from renewable energy such as solar, wind, hydro and others by 2022.

Clean energy sources, such as solar and wind, are getting cheaper. Ten years ago, solar power cost Rs 17 per unit, while today it is close to Rs 7. It has also come closer to global energy prices. "The gap between clean energy and fossil energy is narrowing. The target that India has looks difficult, but is achievable," says Irani.

Former climate adviser to the UN climate secretariat, Mukul Sanwal says, "Consumption, rather than production, will be crucial. By 2030, we are likely to use less coal than China and the US. People are discounting hydro power in India but that will be another big area of development."

CREATING CARBON SINKS

While the creation of a carbon sink could help with the emissions situation, this part of the INDC remains tricky and most experts feel it won't

really work. According to forest governance expert Kanchi Kohli, "Reducing forests to being just carbon sinks is a problem as you can't just put a singular value to them as they are far more valuable than just providing carbon sequestration. You can keep creating these plantation-type forests but they are of no use and will always be culled for economic use like the creation of ports or for mining etc. The provision in the INDC ignores the complexity of forest management and seems short-sighted."



"MORE AGGRESSIVE ACTION ON INDIA'S PART IS POSSIBLE IF TECHNOLOGY IS AVAILABLE OR ELSE WE CAN'T COMMIT TO DOING MORE."

PRAKASH JAVADEKAR
ENVIRONMENT
MINISTER



This is a view echoed by other experts as well. Chandra Bhushan Singh, deputy director general, Centre for Science and Environment, adds, "While the INDC is ambitious, forestry is a challenging area and when we talk of creating 5 billion to 7 billion hectares of new forests, we need to keep issues of biodiversity, land and community in mind. Given the track record of the forest department, I am not hopeful this will be managed efficiently."

FINANCE AND TECHNOLOGY

India says its INDC will cost roughly \$2.5 trillion to be implemented at 2014-15 rates, and this is much higher than what other countries have calculated. While on the surface of it, India's INDC may have a very high price tag on it, given its large and growing population, it is not exorbitant. According to Javadekar, "We are putting pressure on developed countries and have asked them when their financial commitment will come through as promised in the Green Climate Fund. We must give technology an impetus, whatever is critical for clean energy. More aggressive action on India's part is possible if technology is available or else we can't commit to doing more."

According to Arunabha Ghosh, founder, Council for Energy, Environment and Water, "The government is already spending on combating the adverse effects of climate change through its renewables programme. The Union Budget of 2013-14 pegs the actual expenditure on development programmes relevant to climate change adaptation at Rs 760 billion (\$13 billion). Given India's 300 million-plus people lacking access to electricity and the many development challenges, committing to more in the absence of support could risk its development imperatives."

Chairman of wind power company Suzlon, Tulsi Tanti, says meeting the government's renewable energy target of 175 GW by 2022 requires improved availability of grid and land infrastructure at the state level. "State governments need to invest in that area well in advance based on available wind resources in the state," he said.

With so much riding on individual pledges by each country, India's clear, generous and detailed INDC clearly show that the focus is not on numbers but on an overall lifestyle change and a growing awareness that while India will not sell itself short, it recognises the need for sustainable growth and is doing enough domestically to meet its set targets by 2030.

with M.G. Arun

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VIT - A place to learn; A chance to grow

By Vikrant Gupta

The more things change in Indian cricket, the more they remain the same. Just a few months after the dramatic return to power of Jagmohan Dalmiya as Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) president, his death on September 20 has heralded the return to the helm of another forgotten administrator. And the rise of Shashank Manohar, 58, a lawyer by profession, was preceded by the usual cycle of intrigue and subterfuge that marks all BCCI power games.

Long before the news of Dalmiya's demise had sunk in, the lines that connect the 30 local cricket associations that come together to form the BCCI had been ringing off the hook. Sensing an opportunity to take back the steering wheel of Indian cricket in his hands, ICC Chairman N. Srinivasan immediately propped up his protégé Amitabh Choudhary from Jharkhand for the top job, while the opposing faction led by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley and BCCI Secretary Anurag Thakur was keen on installing former Union minister and Uttar Pradesh Cricket Association honcho Rajeev Shukla as the new BCCI president. Keeping a close tab on affairs was another former BCCI and ICC chief, Sharad Pawar, who was himself keen on a second shot at cricket's most-coveted job.

This cat-and-mouse game played out for about 48 hours, until Pawar made a tactical blunder by agreeing to meet friend-turned-foe Srinivasan at his Nationalist Congress Party colleague Praful Patel's Nagpur home. Although the compromise formula they arrived at suited both parties—Srinivasan supports Pawar as BCCI chief, and Pawar in turn lets Srinivasan complete his term as ICC chairman—it set off a chain reaction. Two of Pawar's trusted aides, Ajay Shirke of Maharashtra and Manohar, who represents the Vidarbha Cricket Association in the BCCI, rejected any alliance with Srinivasan on "moral grounds". The news of a new Pawar-Srinivasan alliance also antagonised Jaitley, who asked Thakur to call Manohar for a meeting in Delhi.

REDEMPTION

Back as cricket Board president, Shashank Manohar needs term while tackling the biggest crisis the BCCI has ever fac



MANOHAR'S 5 MISTAKES The BCCI chief made a series of mista

- 1 Let Srinivasan own Chennai Super Kings despite being a BCCI office-bearer by amending the constitution retrospectively.
- 2 Let Lalit Modi run IPL as his individual project, signing payments without BCCI's approvals.
- 3 Terminated Rajasthan Royals and Kings XI Punjab from IPL. RR and KXIP went to court and got a stay order against BCCI's decision.
- 4

SONG

to atone for his first
ed

AP



SHASHANK MANOHAR

kes when he was last at the helm

Several foreign payments during IPL 2 in South Africa came under ED scanner.

5

Failed to check Srinivasan from becoming a 'Super Secretary' running the board with an iron hand.

It was here that Jaitley pulled off a dramatic coup. He offered the top job to Manohar. Knowing he was beaten, Pawar was forced to play ball, and Manohar emerged out of the shadows to be crowned for a second term after his stint between 2008 and 2011.

Although he has often played second-fiddle to both Pawar and Srinivasan in BCCI politics, Manohar has a rich pedigree as a cricket administrator. The son of one of Maharashtra's most famous lawyers, V.R. Manohar, he took over the Vidarbha Cricket Association in the mid-1990s and rose up the ranks through his clean image. While an infamous stand-off between him and former Indian skipper Sourav Ganguly over his association providing a grassy pitch in the 2004 Nagpur Test against Australia, which India lost to concede the "final frontier", made him a villain for the fans, the message from that skirmish was loud and clear—Manohar was not a man to be trifled with.

It was Manohar who, along with Srinivasan, I.S. Bindra and Lalit Modi, plotted the end of Dalmiya's control over BCCI in 2005, propelling Pawar to the top job. As vice president of BCCI, he was the one to propose a pay-per-performance contract system for players after the disastrous World Cup 2007. It got him the reputation of being a ruthless administrator.

But even while his personal integrity was never in doubt, Manohar made a series of mistakes when he was last at the helm. Principal among them was looking the other way while Srinivasan, then BCCI secretary, and Lalit Modi, then the commissioner of IPL, furthered their own interests. With Manohar taking a back seat, Srinivasan expanded not just his footprint and hold over BCCI, he got Manohar to agree to back-dated amendments to the constitution that would allow his company India Cements to own an IPL team while being an office-bearer of BCCI. It was a slip that became the origin of the conflict of interest problem the board finds itself in today. A problem that he will now have to deal with urgently as BCCI faces a crisis of identity with the Supreme Court-appointed Lodha Commission set to pass an order

that could fundamentally change the way the board functions.

Apart from being tasked with restoring Indian cricket's glory days, Manohar returns to the fore at a time when a damning Mudgal Commission report into IPL match-fixing has already led to tough sanctions and bans by the Lodha Commission. The commission is now looking into a possible restructuring of the BCCI and adjudicating on its autonomy, and it's now Manohar's job to ensure that the commission doesn't clip their wings too much.

To start things off on a positive note, Manohar asked his son Adwait, who was on the BCCI's legal and marketing committees, to set a precedent and quit in order to show the board had no room for conflicts of interest. Manohar has also asked for two months to put major changes in place, which, he hopes, will restore the commission's belief in the BCCI.

Manohar has a series of other reforms in mind. He wants to appoint an independent ethics officer or an ombudsman to look into possible conflicts of interest of both BCCI members and players. He wants to make the BCCI's financial records public, and is determined that any expenditure over Rs 25 lakh be put up on the BCCI's website for greater transparency. He is asking for more accountability from state associations over how they are spending money received from the BCCI. He also wants to curb the president's powers so that no one can assume the dictatorial role that Srinivasan had managed to give himself until he was removed last year.

"The circumstances have been unfortunate," said newly appointed Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) President Sourav Ganguly, referring to Dalmiya's death. "But the BCCI has got the best option in Shashank now. I'm sure he will deliver because cricket in India is at a critical stage and we cannot take the issues facing us lightly."

So will this be Shashank Manohar's hour of redemption? Fighting for survival, the powers that be in the BCCI certainly hope so.

Follow the writer on Twitter @vikrantgupta73

UNLIKE ANY OTHER

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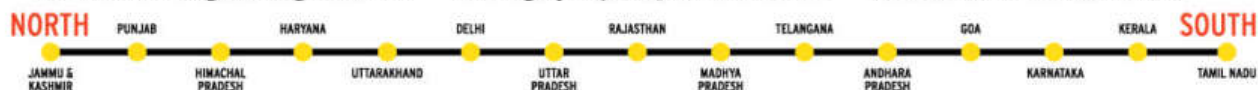


15 states to be crossed in each direction traversing the length and breadth of India in a couple of weeks; seems easy? Not really, cross-country journeys are best made with SUVs. This was a seemingly impossible challenge from the word go but we believed that the beautiful Mercedes-Benz CLA 200 CDI could complete the journey just as well. With faith in Teutonic engineering and the

three-pointed star the two cars headed off.

The North-South team started their journey from the Kargil War Memorial. Customary photographs clicked and homage paid to our fallen heroes, the team started off hitting pristine tarmac from Kargil to Drass. What lay ahead was a challenge greater than the rest of the journey combined – crossing the mighty Zoji La pass. A feat that

would've otherwise been easy for an SUV, became increasingly arduous given the unforgiving terrain the pass presented. Creeping and crawling, protecting the car for the vast journey ahead, the team made it through the pass and headed onto beautiful Sonamarg in Kashmir. Soon after, the roads opened up and Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, U.P and M.P were dealt with ease.



(Left) The rough roads or rather the lack of them at Zoji La are a challenge even for trucks but the North-South bound CLA managed well with some cautious driving. (Right) India Gate made for a beautiful backdrop



The West-East bound white CLA poses in front of the entrance to the majestic Lakhpat fort in Gujarat



The West-East team started their journey from the historical site of Lakhpat Fort. Once a striving business port, an earthquake distanced the coastline. No longer usable for its purpose, Lakhpat is but a tourist attraction now. Gujarat presented some brilliant roads and National Highways as we headed to Ahmedabad and next morning towards M.P. For reasons unknown, we chose back-roads and State Highways to explore M.P and it was a good decision. Farmlands strewn across hilly areas and scarce population and a stunning sunset later, we were en route Nagpur to meet up with the North-South team. The aim was to converge at the geographical centre of India, as marked by the British with a pillar. During The Raj, this point was used to measure distances across India. We figured it would provide an apt setting for the teams to meet up and compare notes before parting ways towards the far reaches of the country. Read the October issue of Auto Today for more adventures and watch this space for part two of Auto Today's X'ing India Challenge.



(Left) Entering Madhya Pradesh on the second day after starting off the West-East leg. (Right) Non-existent roads were common during our journey. (Below) Both CLAs converge at the Zero Milestone in Nagpur, Maharashtra



(FROM LEFT) JAYANTA SENGUPTA, C.P. DHAKAL, C. VASU, VINAY CHAND, INDIA TODAY
AJAY PIRAMAL, R. VASUDEVAN, SIDDEEK AHMED, SURESH REGE, ANOOP RATN

INDIA TODAY PHOTOS



A CLEAN SWEEP

Cleanliness tops the Prime Minister Nare

By Shantanu Datta and
Kritika Banerjee

Papon, like many musicians, a man carrying his multiple talents in hyphens, singer-composer-record producer, was a trifle 'disappointed'. He had come ready to talk like an 'intellectual' on a serious issue. Instead, he rued with a straight face, he had to do what he has to do everywhere: sing.

It was fitting that Papon came in the middle of the day-long event. He was preceded by Daler Mehndi and Udit Narayan and followed by Kailash Kher, Sonu Nigam and Shaan. That afternoon, and late into the evening,

they had added a hyphen to their flair as cleanliness ambassadors. And together, they brought the house down at India Today's Safaigiri Awards on October 2, Gandhi Jayanti. Not many, not in the least the singers themselves, as Papon put it in jest, had perhaps thought a message as serious and sombre as cleanliness could be delivered and carried forward through songs at an event to mark Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. And which was to culminate with Modi giving away the Safaigiri Awards.

But as India Today Editor-in-Chief and Group Chairman Aroon Purie said in his inaugural address, and a

message repeated by all the singers; music crosses all cultural boundaries—it inspires and unites.

If singing live in front of an audience is the big deal, then Daler Mehndi is the king of hearts in this part of the world. Right from his foot-tapping Safaigiri anthem—"Safai ke dhunn yaar merey sunn; O rab de bandey safai bada gunn"—to resetting lyrics of popular numbers on the spot to tune them with the "safai" theme, he lifted the tempo from the start.

The takeaway "Gandagi ki ban di, pura India chamakda..."

Long before Daler Mehndi had started singing professionally, a man with a forever-smiling face and a voice

STRIKING A CHORD



"Although we could have started walking this line—the safai abhiyan—a little earlier, what's important is that it has started."
SHAN



"I believe it is every Indian's duty to keep our nation clean. There is no better way to spread this message but through music."
DALER MEHNDI



GROUP CHAIRMAN AND EDITOR-IN-CHIEF AROON PURIE, PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI, USHA CHAUMAR, AKER RAO, VIJAY DEV, P.B. SALIM, NARESH KUMAR AT THE INDIA TODAY SAFAIGIRI SUMMIT & AWARDS IN DELHI



charts at day-long singathon, hits the high notes with Narendra Modi giving away the first India Today Safaigiri Awards

that was associated with “romantic geet-sangeet” had burst onto the imagination of a nation. It was 1988, the song was “Papa kehte hain bada naam karega”, and the man behind the voice Udit Narayan. For the next nearly two decades, his was the voice those in love and the lovelorn returned to. In not only Hindi, but in 35 languages, as Narayan told the audience. As evidence, he even sang in Tamil after felicitating Safaigiri Tech Icon winner Rajagopalan Vasudevan.

The takeaway In keeping with the simple-living dictum to save the environs, he still drives a hatchback.

Enter Papon, wondering aloud whether his sombre songs will not

bring down the mood a few flights after Narayan’s pleasant, romantic ones. Starting with the *Barfi!* song “Kyun, na hum tum chale tedhe-medhe se raston pe nange paanvre”, for the next more than half an hour, he kept the spectators alive, singing and even dancing—to Bollywood and Bihu.

The takeaway Back in his home state Assam, fans of the singer, who call themselves Paponists, go about cleaning their towns and streets regularly.

Like Papon, Kailash Kher too straddles the world of Bollywood and indie music at the same time. It’s been extremely rewarding for his fans—“Allah ke bande”, “Saiyyan”, “Teri Deewani”, among others. Kher



“An Indian who goes abroad wraps the chewing gum before trashing it. The same person will break the rules and dirty his surroundings here.”

PAPON

“We have to change our attitude towards cleanliness. It is not the next person’s responsibility. We are all equally responsible and are equal stakeholders.”

KAILASH KHER

INDIA TODAY SAFAIGIRI AWARDS

- **GARBAGE GURU**
MAILHEM IKOS
Col (retd) Suresh Rege Founder, Mailhem Ikos, Pune
- **TOILET TITAN**
ERAM SOLUTIONS
Siddeek Ahmed Owner, Eram Scientific Solutions, Kerala
- **TECH ICON**
PLASTIC-TAR ROAD TECHNOLOGY
R. Vasudevan Dean, Thiagarajar College of Engineering, Madurai
- **WATER WARRIOR**
NAANDI FOUNDATION
Anoop Ratnakar Rao CEO, Naandi Community Water Services Ltd., Hyderabad
- **COMMUNITY MOBILISER**
NADIA, WEST BENGAL
P.B. Salim Ex-district magistrate and collector, Nadia
- **CLEANEST PARK**
ROCK GARDEN
Vijay Dev Adviser to Chandigarh Administration
- **CLEANEST MARKETPLACE**
CONNAUGHT PLACE
Naresh Kumar Chairman, NDMC
- **CLEANEST HILL STATION**
GANGTOK, SIKKIM
C.P. Dhakal Commissioner, Gangtok Municipal Corporation
- **CORPORATE TRAILBLAZERS**
PIRAMAL FOUNDATION
Ajay Piramal Chairman, Piramal Group
- **CLEANEST GHAT**
ASSI GHAT, VARANASI
Usha Chamar Honorary president, Sulabh International
- **CLEANEST MONUMENT**
VICTORIA MEMORIAL
Jayanta Sengupta Curator and secretary, Victoria Memorial, Kolkata
- **CLEANEST BEACH TOWN**
HAVELOCK ISLAND
C. Vasu Executive engineer, Panchayats, South Andaman Islands
- **CLEANEST TEMPLE TOWN**
TIRUPATI
Vinay Chand Commissioner, Municipal Corporation of Tirupati



"Wherever I go, in India or abroad, I talk of safaigiri. Bapu Mahatma Gandhi had dreamt of it, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made that dream a reality."

UDIT NARAYAN



"Municipal bodies are the ones which are supposed to work on these issues. It is like inviting me for a function but then I only lip-sync."

SONU NIGAM

felicitated the representatives of the New Delhi Municipal Council and the Chandigarh Administration for the cleanest marketplace (Connaught Place) and garden (Rock Garden), respectively, both venues where he has performed live.

The takeaway Following a show at Qutab Minar with his band Kailasa once, he was dumbfounded with the "love messages" etched on the monument's walls. "We Indians are great lovers, but we should confine that expression to within our homes."

If Kher has an off-on affair with Bollywood, Sonu Nigam could be called the industry's admirer perhaps even before he came of voting age. Although he had a sore throat till only a few days before the event and could not hit the higher notes, Nigam, one of Bollywood's best live performers, having grown up on it, was game enough to render more than a few, getting even his father to sing a ghazal.

The takeaway Coming from a middle-class family, Nigam said if he could learn most good habits, "including good toilet habits", there is no reason why others cannot, especially in the urban milieu.

A contemporary who entered the Indian mind space during those initial days of countdown shows, Shaan, like Nigam, brought that flamboyance on stage, requesting the crowd to walk with him in this cleanliness drive—"Chaar kadam bas chaar kadam, chal do naa saath merey".

The takeaway "Koi kahe kehta rahe, Bharat mein hogi safai..."

It could not have been set up better for perhaps the biggest 'rockstar' on India's horizon at the moment, a man who, at a few hours' notice, can fill up a stadium, let alone a hall. As Purie reminded the audience while welcoming Prime Minister Modi, "India's most

"I DON'T THINK EVER SINCE INDEPENDENCE, SWACHHATA WAS EVER DISCUSSED IN PARLIAMENT. IN THE LAST ONE YEAR, THERE HAS NOT BEEN A SESSION WHEN IT WAS NOT DISCUSSED."

**PRIME MINISTER
NARENDRA MODI**

"THIS HAS TO BE A PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT. WE CANNOT JUST WAIT FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO GIVE US A CLEAN INDIA. WE ALL HAVE TO DO OUR PART. WE ARE ALL IN IT TOGETHER."

**INDIA TODAY GROUP
CHAIRMAN
AROON PURIE**



relentless force of nature, a one-man army, the man who has more energy than all of us put together", had come straight after addressing gruelling political rallies in Bihar.

At a time of media overkill, do we realise that 1,000 children die every day due to diseases spread by the filth they live in, Modi asked, after giving away prizes to the India Today Safaigiri champions. The average family, he added, spends nearly Rs 7,000 on medication to fight such diseases—money that can be spent elsewhere. A World Bank report says 600 million people in India defecate in the open—a major reason for the spread of communicable diseases, he said. The result was the call for a Swachh Bharat. The government had set a target of constructing 6 million toilets across the country. "Yesterday I asked how many we have built, since we were just a day shy of Gandhi Jayanti. I was told 9.5 million toilets had been constructed," he said.

"The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, however, will not succeed if it remains a government programme. If it becomes Modi's programme, it will definitely not succeed," he said with a chuckle, to loud cheers from the audience. "It will succeed only if it becomes a programme for us all."

Like all good ideas, which more often than not come with a spark rather than deliberating over spreadsheets, the vision for Swachh Bharat was not a well thought-out, cut and dried idea on August 15 last year, when Modi announced it during his Independence Day address. "Mann kiya toh bol diya (I felt like doing it, so I announced it). It was a huge risk," Modi said. Certainly a risk worth taking, and a fight worth fighting.

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business today
FOR MANAGING TOMORROW



T.N. NINAN

AN INCOMPLETE IDEA

Government must reform itself before it attempts to reform the economy
says T.N. Ninan in a compelling narrative of a constantly changing India

Photograph by CHANDRADEEP KUMAR

By Montek Singh Ahluwalia

T.N. Ninan is regarded as a guru among economic journalists, with a remarkable ability to make ordinary people understand complex problems. This book will add to that reputation. Ninan takes the reader effortlessly through different aspects of India's economic, social and political evolution over the past three decades, presenting a multi-faceted picture with many contradictions and tensions.

There is much in Ninan's account that is positive. Economic reforms have led to faster growth, especially after 2003. This in turn has led to what Ninan describes as "the fastest decline in poverty since poverty numbers began to be computed in the early 1970s", which, he also points out, would not have happened if the good news was confined only to the cities. The private sector has thrown up many successful new entrepreneurs, not only in IT but also in sophisticated manufacturing. ISRO's amazingly low-cost Mangalyaan mission testifies to the capability of Indian scientists. India is now a competitive location for research centres for many of the world's top corporations. Civil society organisations have grown in strength and are participating much more actively, aided by some important institutional changes such as the Right to Information Act.

There are negatives also and these are fully spelt out. Although poverty has declined there are signs of rural distress reflected in farmer suicides. Manufacturing growth has been less than what is needed to generate sufficient high quality jobs to meet the aspirations of the growing numbers of educated youth. We have achieved much less than we should have in education and health. Environmental degradation is a serious problem, most visibly reflected in pervasive air and water pollution. The most important negative development is the perception that corruption has been pervasive.

Ninan rightly traces most of the high-profile corruption to the fact that the economic reforms were incomplete. They were not extended to areas such as labour, land, and key natural resource sectors such as mining and spectrum. Lack of reform in land and the allocation of natural resources meant a continuation of the earlier system for allocating these resources, which led to a proliferation of rent seeking, and inevitable allegations of corruption. Ninan notes that many of those suspected of wrongdoing have paid a price. Some politicians had to resign and others are facing prosecution in the courts along with several civil servants. However, the long time taken by the legal process to bring these cases to conclusion has allowed the perception of unpunished corruption to remain firmly imprinted in the public mind.

Inevitably, the erosion of trust and the intervention of the courts have unsettled the investment climate. Fortunately, corrective steps have been taken in some areas which should ensure better outcomes in future. The UPA govern-

ment had itself decided that future allocations of both spectrum and mining licenses would be through auctions, and this has since been implemented. However, land, and especially change in land use, remains unreformed. This is entirely in the domain of the states and whichever state government moves first will score high on improving the investment climate.

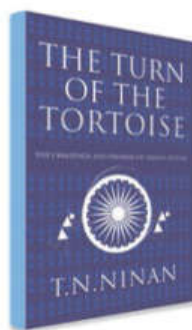
An important message from the book is that the government needs to do a lot to reform itself. At one point, Ninan quotes a chief executive of one of the world's foremost engineering conglomerates as observing that his company "had succeeded every time it bet on the Indian people, less so but with good success when it bet on the Indian market, and least of all when it bet on Indian policy making and policy makers". Ninan clearly sympathises with this assessment and does not feel that the government has what it should have to reform itself. He mentions the large number of recommendations made by the Second Administrative Reforms Commission (under Veerappa Moily) which have not been implemented. There is merit in this criticism and there is need for far-reaching reform. Systems of recruitment and promotion in the civil services remain hopelessly antiquated.

In Ninan's view, the logic of reforms required the government to give much greater play to market forces, subject to appropriate regulation where necessary, but it has not done so in a holistic fashion. The market is tolerated, but the political instinct of interfering in markets at the slightest sign of problems remains very strong. This is reinforced by a general public perception that whenever a problem arises in the private sector, it must be met with strong punitive "action", much stronger than what would be advocated for a similar shortcoming in the public sector. All political parties are ambivalent about the market.

Ninan does not share the simplistic view that the solution lies in government simply shrinking. In fact, he rightly points out that it needs to expand in many areas. We need many

more policemen and judges to come up to any reasonable norms given the size of our population. We also need more teachers and nurses. The government should have focused much more on these areas and on infrastructure. It would have been able to do more if it could exit from producing services and products which can be better done by the private sector. However, as Ninan points out, no political party is willing to privatise public sector organisations, even those that are visibly under-performing. It is only chronically loss-making enterprises that are considered for privatisation, but those are precisely the units no one would want to buy!

Curiously, there is little public support for privatisation. One can imagine why labour doesn't want PSUs to be privatised, but why do consumers of products and services, who often prefer the private sector when they have a choice, not support a more aggressive privatisation policy? Ninan does



**The Turn Of The Tortoise:
The Challenge and
Promise of India's Future**
T.N. Ninan
Penguin
Pages 368
Price Rs 699

not provide an answer to these questions, but they do indicate the constraints under which policies are framed.

Another important message from the book is the endorsement of the Acemoglu-Robinson thesis that accelerated growth can only be sustained if the institutions that support growth also develop *pari passu*. The failure to do so has led in many cases to what is called the middle-income trap. India has not seen institutional development at the pace needed in critical areas. An example of institutional weakness mentioned by Ninan is that our laws are often poorly drafted and lend themselves to arbitrary interpretation. Lack of clarity in laws can be hugely problematic, leading to what can be perceived as deliberate harassment, forcing recourse to prolonged litigation. This is something we can ill-afford if we want to create a pro investment climate, and especially attract FDI.

An example which Ninan does not mention is the Prevention of Corruption Act which contains provisions which could make a civil servant liable to be charged for corruption even if he/she has never accepted a bribe or a favour, simply because a particular decision is seen as having conveyed an undeserved benefit to a private party! Predictably, this has the effect that civil servants feel safe only if they have raised every single question which could be raised before a private sector proposal is cleared rather than helping it constructively. Are we surprised that the ease of doing business is low?

The absence of effective systems of dispute resolution when the government interacts with the private sector is another institutional lacuna. This is particularly important in public private partnership projects, where the concession agreements may run for 30 years. Disputes are bound to arise in such situations and it is important to have a credible system of dispute resolution that is seen to be quick and fair. The absence of a modern bankruptcy law is another major weakness. We cannot expect to finance private sector infrastructure projects through bond financing unless such a law is put in place. Many of these initiatives are in the pipeline. They should form the essential agenda for second genera-

tion reforms.

On the non-economic side, Ninan points to the rise of illiberal tendencies, and the threats they pose to building a liberal modern society. He lists many reasons to worry. One of these is the increasing resort to banning books, going back to the ban on Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, the more recent ban on a biography of Shivaji, and threats by fringe groups leading to the pulping of Wendy Doniger's book on Hinduism. Growing intolerance is also laced with violence as reflected in the late M.F. Husain's self exile to Dubai, following threats to his safety after an exhibition of his paintings was vandalised in Mumbai, or by the recent murder of a leading campaigner against superstition. The delicate balance of communal harmony, which is all too easily disturbed, is something that should worry us all. The rise of *khap* panchayats is a reaction to modernity and also a threat to liberal values.

All these themes, and many others, are woven into a compelling narrative of a constantly changing India that is also on the move. There is much in the book that is deeply worrying but it ends on a positive note that will resonate with many. "The reassuring facts in a broadly hopeful scenario are that the directions of change are overwhelmingly positive, and that the system as a whole has a bedrock of stability that is not affected by the surface churn. That is why each generation of Indians has been able to say with confidence that the life of the next generation will get better for larger numbers—not at optimum but at an acceptable speed, and not wholly but very substantially." The Nehruvian flourish at the end is a nice touch. It suggests that given our many constraints we haven't done all that badly although of course, we should have done better in the past, and we certainly need to do much more in many new areas to improve performance in future.

Montek Singh Ahluwalia was the deputy chairman of the Planning Commission

EXCERPTS

NOT TWINS AND NOT ALIKE

It was Jack Welch who as chairman of General Electric (GE) visited New Delhi in September 1989 (a year before India plunged into a foreign exchange crisis that triggered economic reforms) and declared famously that he saw India and China as the big new markets of the future. Soon the term 'Chindia' came into vogue, in India if not China, to bracket the two countries together. But, a quarter-century after Welch homed in on the two countries, GE's China business had vaulted to become three to four times its India business, even as China's GDP had grown to become five times India's. China became the world's second

largest economy in 2010, five years ahead of a 2003 Goldman Sachs forecast. By 2014, it had become the world's largest economy if measured by PPP, as also its leading exporter and manufacturing power. Two Asian giants may be rising at the same time, but that does not make them equal today even if their economies were of broadly comparable size in 1980.

In the two decades that straddled the turn of the century (coterminous with India's post-reform period), China's income grew at the astonishing rate of 10.5 per cent annually, while India managed 6.6 per cent. In the preceding decade

of the 1980s, growth had been even more unbalanced—10 per cent for China and 5.4 per cent for India. While India struggled with trade deficits, China's trade surpluses helped it build up foreign exchange reserves that are twice India's GDP. China has dwarfed India on foreign investment flows; its success has given strength to the yuan, whereas the rupee has steadily lost ground. India may have been a country on the ascendant, but in the space of one generation it has yielded almost unrecoverable ground to China.

By the time India began its economic reforms in 1991, China's economy had become twice India's in size. To Indian observers at the time, this did not seem significant. Indeed, there was a tendency among Indian economists to question the veracity of some of the improbable numbers that China had begun to report—like 14 per cent GDP growth. As the years rolled by, though, the gaps became too big to be glossed over. By then, India was already two decades and more behind China on key indicators, and it has not closed the gap since.

If the Indian economy were to grow at an annual average of 9 per cent, it would take virtually two decades to get to China's current size (in nominal dollars). China's literacy rate in 1991 was 78 per cent, whereas India's was just 52 per cent. Twenty years later, India's literacy rate was still only 74 per cent while China had moved ahead to 95 per cent. It was the same with life expectancy. China's in 1991 was seventy years; twenty years later, India could boast of only sixty-six years. Even if India were to take the lead in the pace of economic and social progress, while China slackens off, as is generally expected, it will take till 2035 to get to where China is today—and China is not resting on its laurels. The economic, social and power imbalance is therefore a reality for at least the first half of the twenty-first century.

Most of India has woken up only now to the disillusioning reality that the narrative of 'two Asian giants rising simultaneously' is long past its validity date. By the end of the first decade of the new century, China had annual steel consumption that was more than eight times India's and six times India's car sales. It was building 1000 MW of fresh power capacity every week, compared to 400 MW by India. It accounted for more than 40 per cent of the world's consumption of copper, more than half of the total aluminium, and half also of the skyscrapers being built in the world. Naturally, it was also emitting much greater quantities of greenhouse gases, but India's climate change negotiators (still hostage to the Chindia mindset) decided to make common cause with China.

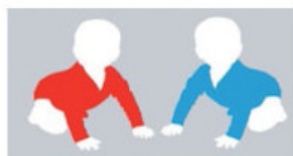
Meanwhile, China had built more than 9,300 km of high-speed rail track, with another 14,000 km under construction, to handle trains running at faster than 200 kmph. The superfast

train from Beijing to Shanghai takes less than five hours. Even the standard train takes only ten hours. In embarrassing contrast, Indian Railways' premier 'superfast' Rajdhani Express from Delhi to Mumbai (a comparable distance) takes the same sixteen hours that it did forty-five years ago, when the service was launched. Indian policymakers and businessmen can barely begin to understand the creation of an ecosystem that has also enabled China to account for 60 per cent of the world's production of zippers, 70 per cent of its toys, nearly a third of its garment trade and a dominant share of IT-sector hardware and solar photo-voltaic cells. Before China's economic slowdown in 2013–14, the *increase* in its steel consumption was more than India's total annual steel consumption of 76 million tonnes.

CAN GREEKS BECOME GERMANS?

And so, the question has often been asked, what lessons can India learn from the Chinese success story? Can they be applied to India—or is the national genius, or DNA, so different that copycat strategies won't work? It is when one confronts these questions that the similarities assumed on the basis of size, scale and (once upon a time) income level are seen to be superficial. The historical and cultural differences between the two entities, and therefore their political and economic choices, are more substantive factors. China's geographical core has been a centrally administered empire for a couple of millennia, whereas India's history mostly comprises multiple feuding monarchies. China is overwhelmingly Han, while India is a polyglot nation with every kind of diversity: ethnic, linguistic, religious, caste. China has a long experience of being run by a merit-based bureaucracy, India does not. China has a sense of destiny (the Middle Kingdom with a mandate from heaven), history and continuity, while India's history is the cause of current political contestations.

Differences in the modern era are equally substantial. China became a one-party dictatorship while India imitated Westminster democracy. China's rulers emerged hardened from a civil war and could take the tough decisions about breaking down old ways of doing things in order to create a new reality, whereas India won its freedom through non-violence, so its leaders were inclined to make the softer choices. China mobilized its masses to bring about revolutionary change, whereas India sought change through laws passed in Parliament and implemented by a bureaucratic set-up inherited from colonial rulers. In the early days, China emphasized change in the countryside while India sought industrialization. China achieved rapid progress on the



If the Indian economy were to grow at an annual average of 9 per cent, it would take virtually two decades to get to China's current size (in nominal dollars).

key human indicators while India did not. China began reforming its economy in 1978 with a sense of national purpose; India's reforms since 1991 have been half-hearted at best and without much political conviction. The end results have thus been very different: by 2014 China's economy was more than five times India's in size, and the country a global power that cast a shadow over India's regional status.

The two countries' paths to development have been almost polar opposites. For a long time, China was seen to have a better macro story than its micro story: that is, its state performed better than individual companies. India in contrast had an underperforming state that failed to deliver the basics, while its entrepreneurs (usually from the traditional trading castes) ran a better-performing corporate sector. China therefore attracted more foreign direct investment in job-creating new factories, while India attracted portfolio investment in existing companies. In recent years, following sweeping reform of its public sector, China's micro story has improved as well.

China achieved what it did by throwing resources on an unprecedented scale into development of infrastructure, by offering factory owners swarms of workers with no real rights to industrial action or collective bargaining, and by keeping its currency artificially low in order to capture export markets while suppressing local demand. It operated an opaque banking, financial and pricing system in which outside observers found it hard to understand cost structures; also by stealing or copying technology from foreign firms that invested in China; and by achieving exceptionally high productivity norms on factory floors.

India is not about to do any of these; it couldn't even if it wanted to. While the Indian state has never been able to deliver adequate physical infrastructure (electricity, roads, ports), the existence of a capital market meant that the relationship between capital investment and increased output (the incremental capital-output ratio) has always been better in India than in China—that is, it can achieve similar rates of economic growth with the use of less capital. At the same time, the attempt to apply private-sector efficiency to building infrastructure (through public-private partnerships) ended with bad investments, stalled projects and debt-laden balance sheets.

Taking away the collective bargaining rights of industrial labour, as China has done for all practical purposes, would be unthinkable in a multi-party parliamentary democracy with a long-term left-of-centre bias. A mercantilist currency policy to keep the rupee cheap is ideologically taboo among Indian policymakers and unpopular

among politicians, and in any case is not without its costs if pursued for any length of time. And the wholesale theft of industrial technology is impossible in a country with an independent judiciary.

Importantly, the combination of large-scale production and very high productivity, which seems to have an East Asian patent, appears to be too far a leap for India. Chinese workers are better educated and better fed, and seem to take willingly to the monotony of repetitive shop-floor work. Those in charge of India's National Skill Development Corporation report, in contrast, reveal that young Indian men show a marked preference for training that will help them get white-collar jobs, even if manufacturing work pays more. Anecdotal evidence suggests that they are willing to take up to a 50 per cent cut in pay, to switch from blue- or brown-collar to white-collar work (among other things, it improves prospects in the marriage market). Similarly, whereas young women in China are willing to move far away from home and stay in dormitories located next to factories, their Indian counterparts prefer to stay at home and get bussed to work. This is slower, costlier, less efficient, and results in higher absenteeism.

The Chinese system has fewer checks and balances, so the alignment of objectives is easier, with coordinated action to follow. In India the two major political parties can agree on the need for a new law, yet each will try to stop the other from getting it passed in Parliament. Much of Narendra Modi's initial legislative thrust and policy stance were on issues that his party had opposed when in opposition (higher foreign investment in the insurance sector, a border settlement with Bangladesh, the goods and services tax, majority foreign investment in organized retail trade, and so on). Even more ironically, its principal political battle was to try and undo something it had voted in favour of when in opposition (the 2013 land acquisition law).

The separation of powers between legislature, executive and judiciary makes getting project clearances a complicated hurdle race. This is especially so when populism comes easily to politicians merely seeking votes and legislatures pass unrealistic laws. The executive is rule-bound rather than result-oriented, and the judiciary given to overreach, issuing sweeping judgments that sometimes show a divorce from economic logic. The result, as Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew declared tersely a few years ago, is that 'Indians talk while Chinese do'—a remark that drew raucous laughter in the Singapore business forum where Lee was speaking. ■



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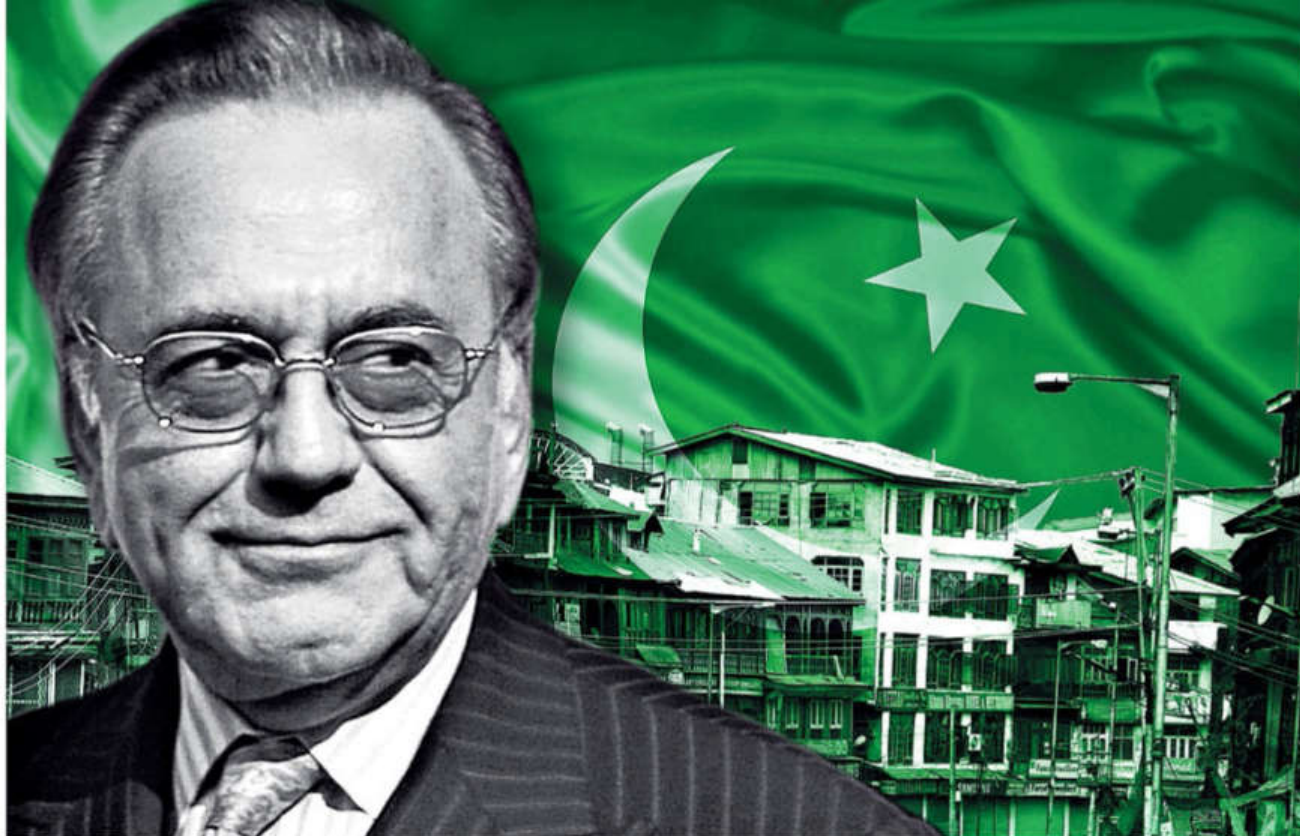
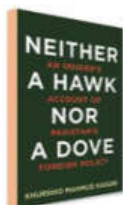


Illustration by SAURABH SINGH

PAKISTAN'S MAGNIFICENT OBSESSION

An enlightened diplomat reflects on Pakistan's difficult ties with India
with disarming candour and clarity of thought



**Neither a Hawk
nor a Dove**
by Khurshid
Mahmud Kasuri
Oxford University
Press
Pages 354
Price Rs 999

By Natwar Singh

This is a whale of a book. Absorbing, controversial, stimulating and utterly sincere. It combines disarming candour with clarity of thought. When Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri looks inwards and reflects on the dark clouds that so often appear on the India-Pakistan skies, he does not get discouraged. Neither do I. However, diplomacy offers hope, not salvation.

"This book is largely about Pakistan's difficult relations with India," says the author. He devotes 340 pages to India (read Kashmir). The chapters on the US, China and Russia, although important, are beyond

the scope of this review.

Since our first meeting in 2004 in Dalian in north China we have got on well. He is among the outstanding foreign ministers Pakistan has produced. Our discussions have been cordial and civilised. I discerned no cerebral inadequacy in Kasuri. His urbanity and engaging personality helped. At the time we were only too conscious of the hazards and complexities of the issues, none of which could be

neglected. There could be no cheerful bonhomie, but ran-cour was kept out of the conference. Compatibility of temperament was an unexpected asset. We both liked living dangerously.

Neither a Hawk Nor a Dove is loaded with too many details. Even an author with a freakish memory could not have recalled discussions, bilateral, multilateral and strictly confidential conversations. Nor recall the contents of top secret deliberations. He has, I imagine with the approval of his government, had access to top secret and confidential files, documents and sensitive reports. He has been fortunate. In India, this could not happen.

Kasuri somewhat disingenuously writes, "This book is not about Pakistan politics, but its foreign policy." They are two sides of the coin. If the domestic scene is incohesive and replete with avoidable fault lines, that country cannot have an influential, creative or meaningful foreign policy.

Those dealing with India-Pakistan relations should keep the following in mind:

- ▶ Indo-Pak relations are accident-prone. One must keep a hawk eye on the diplomatic pressure cooker.
- ▶ The future of our bilateral relations lies in the past. Kasuri concedes that both sides carry baggage of the past.
- ▶ Pakistan is obsessed with Kashmir. Its diplomats spend

much time on raking up Kashmir at the United Nations (UN) and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which is not an inspiring organisation. The Islamic world is divided right down the middle. Kasuri astoundingly asserts that Pakistan's army does not interfere in civilian, non-army matters. History says otherwise.

Democracy has not taken root in Pakistan. The coups of Field Marshal Ayub Khan, Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq and General Pervez Musharraf were to get rid of the civilian governments. Bangladesh 1971 is a horrific example of the Pakistani army's genocidal activities. One only has to read the book, *The Blood Telegram*, by Gary J. Bass to learn about the horrendous tragedy. The lamentable Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger did not even condemn the actions of their trusted ally and friend. The events of 1971 were recalled by Zia-ul-Haq to me in angry and passionate terms: "Kanwar Sahib we can never forget what India did to break up Pakistan." An answer was easy but I refrained from bandying words with the president.

When it comes to Kashmir, the Pakistani army calls the shots in close collaboration with the ubiquitous ISI. Pakistan's policy on Kashmir is that it is a trilateral issue—India, Pakistan and the people of Kashmir—and the wishes of the third party must be ascertained. Surprisingly, Kasuri agrees with this approach.

For India, Kashmir is a bilateral issue. It is also a symbol of our secularism. Only once, during Lal Bahadur Shastri's time, did it become trilateral. The Soviets got into the act. A trilateral meeting was held in Tashkent in January 1966, Soviet prime minister Alexei Kosygin was the presiding deity (with apologies to Marx).

I have since the early 1980s kept myself up to date on this vital relationship. We have fought three major wars and two minor ones. All five proved that 10 Pakistani soldiers were not equal to one Indian soldier. This kind of bombastic boastfulness is unseemly. I am second to none in promoting cordial and good neighbourly relations with Pakistan. After mature consideration I have come to the demoralising conclusion that Kashmir is a case of what cannot be cured has to be endured.

I am not enthusiastic about back-channel India-Pakistan diplomacy. The example Kasuri gives of the back-channel talks between Kissinger and Le Duc Tho during the Vietnam War does not obviously apply to Indian and Pakistani back channels. That was a one-time exercise. No 'Joint Mechanism' can work if the "Kashmiris on both sides could cooperate in specific areas of mutual interest and where Indians and Pakistanis would also be present in one form or other". Kasuri, if I am not mistaken, goes along with this.

Such an unrealistic solution would be used to score points for home consumption. Musharraf in his book, *In the Line of Fire*, writes, "...most important, have joint management mechanism with a membership consisting of

Pakistanis, Indians and Kashmiris..." A non-starter. The late Brajesh Mishra, the then prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's principal secretary and national security adviser, was dedicated to back-channel diplomacy, which would find a mutually accepted solution. I told him that any solution envisaging an alteration in the geography of the Valley would never be accepted by the Congress or Parliament. Musharraf was no General Charles de Gaulle, and Vajpayee no Abraham Lincoln. Worse still, Vajpayee headed a coalition government. I told Brajesh, make the LoC the international border. Farooq Abdullah had publicly said so. This practical solution has been rejected. Hence, a solution appears a receding target.

Terrorism is another issue on which the two countries differ vehemently. Pakistan exports terrorism. Non-state terrorists are free to act. Mumbai is a glaring example. No apology is forthcoming from Islamabad.

During the ill-fated Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in December 1979, Pakistan became a frontline state and Zia-ul-Haq became diplomatic legal tender. After the execution of Z.A. Bhutto in April 1979, Zia-ul-Haq was an international persona non grata. The Americans poured dollars and armaments into Afghanistan, created the Mujahideen and encouraged the Taliban. President Zia-ul-Haq was not far behind. The Americans and the Pakistanis sowed the wind and are reaping the whirlwind in Afghanistan. Barack Obama has "cut and run". George Bush destroyed Iraq, a secular non-aligned country. Pakistan resents Indian presence in Afghanistan. This is amazing.

India's relations with Afghanistan go back to at least five centuries. We not only have an embassy in Kabul, India has consulates in Kandahar, Mazar-i-Sharif and Herat. They are assisting the Afghan people and government in all possible ways. A senior Indian diplomat was killed in a bomb attack on our embassy in Kabul by the Taliban.

I wholeheartedly congratulate Kasuri, an enlightened diplomat, for the dedication with which he has worked to improve India-Pakistan relations, against all odds. Pakistani hawks in the competent and all pervasive army make his task immensely difficult. War is no longer an option. Both countries are nuclear powers. Kasuri did reduce tensions, made the composite dialogue move forward. It was his duty to present his country's foreign policy with resolution and vigour. I did the same for my country.

I doubt if Manmohan Singh will thank me for quoting him. This is what he said in Amritsar on January 8, 2007. "I dream of a day, while retaining our respective national identities, one can have breakfast in Amritsar, lunch in Lahore and dinner in Kabul." You can't argue with that.

Natwar Singh is former external affairs minister

WHEN IT COMES
TO KASHMIR,
THE PAKISTANI
ARMY CALLS THE
SHOTS IN CLOSE
COLLABORATION
WITH THE
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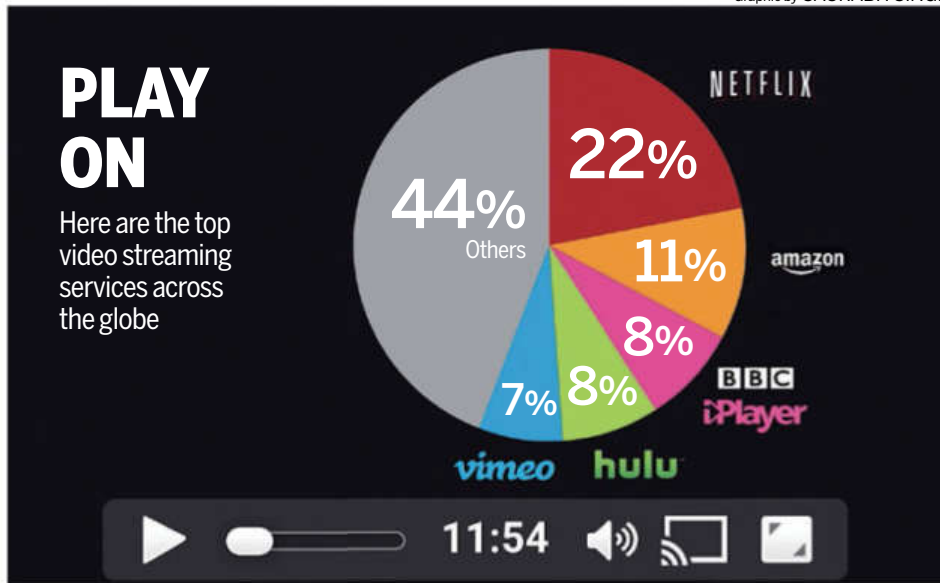
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Graphic by SAURABH SINGH



How to Arrange a Divorce

SnG, a comedy channel on YouTube, has created a video, 'Arranged Divorce', which showcases how a divorce proceeding would look like if it was treated like an arranged marriage. The hilarious video with more than 100,000 views, shows in-laws visiting each other to discuss their children's shortcomings and performing rituals that befit the occasion.



viral video



A child's reaction on discovering Adam Levine, lead vocalist of rock band Maroon 5, is married amused 4 million.



More than 2.5 million watched a promo for a reboot of the old TV show, *The X-Files*.



Comedian Jay Leno's interactions with the public while posing as an Uber cab driver wowed more than 1 million.

instachatter

Picture that Wows

A selfie taken by actor Arjun Kapoor at the inauguration of the Indian Soccer League has been shared extensively on various social networks and has got more than 65,000 likes in less than 24 hours. But the popularity of the photo might be also because of the fact that Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, Alia Bhatt, Sachin Tendulkar, Nita Ambani and actor Rajinikanth have posed with Kapoor. The Instagram picture is being dubbed as Bollywood's version of TV host Ellen DeGeneres's famous Oscar selfie.



pixel perfect

Caught in a Tight Pot



More than a million netizens have marvelled at a video of a leopard wandering in a Rajasthan village with its head stuck inside a metal pot. People shared pictures and videos of the wild feline on social media, many questioning if anyone was brave enough to free it. The leopard had to be tranquilised and was freed after six hours.

net fail

Suicidal Selfie

Sometimes selfies can get you in trouble, especially when you're stupid enough to post them at the wrong time. A couple in Ohio, accused of robbing a bank, got caught after they posted selfies with the stolen money on Facebook. The photos included one of them posing with a chunk of dollar bills in the mouth.



web wow

Pitch Perfect

Ghazal singer Farida Khanum's rendition of 'Aaj Jane Ki Zid Na Karo' on a recent edition of Coke Studio has wowed Indian and Pakistani audiences alike. A video of the 80-year-old singer belting out the ghazal, written by Fayyaz Hashmi, has got more than 60,000 YouTube views in one day.



what's new

App Alert

Kibo keyboard lets you chat privately with friends via text messages in any popular messenger.



Instasnoop lets you access Instagram profiles of even those whom you don't follow.



Follow the writer on Twitter @lkummi



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TAKING THE LEAD

From imitating Michael Jackson at Muslim weddings to learning kathak, for Akram Khan, dance is all about challenging the norm

By Suhani Singh

Classical dance for me is imprisonment,” says feted Bangladeshi-British dancer-choreographer Akram Khan to more than 100 bharatanatyam students at Rukmini Arangam in Kalakshetra, Chennai. It’s a daring statement to make at one of the most renowned classical dance institutions in India; more so since Khan’s own movement vocabulary is rooted in kathak. It shocks a student. Observant, Khan immediately adds, “I don’t mean it in a negative way,” assuring her that her training in the sylvan campus is not going waste. “I need to know what form and structure is before I find the freedom to break it.”

Khan has pushed the boundaries of kathak and created a genre of his own by embracing contemporary dance and weaving in theatre. He has offered glimpses of his evolving style at the opening ceremony of the 2012 London Olympics, and in collaborations with artists from diverse fields such as author Hanif Kureishi (‘A God of Small Tales’ and ‘Ma’), composer Nitin Sawhney (‘zero degrees’, ‘Bahok’), artist Anish Kapoor (‘Kaash’) and actress Juliette Binoche (‘In-I’). He has stepped out of his comfort zone to choreograph pop star Kylie Minogue’s Showgirl tour, and made Freida Pinto do contemporary dance in *Desert Dancer*, his film debut.

With such a wealth of experience, it’s no surprise that Khan has the students of Kalakshetra hooked with both anecdotes and dynamic moves. He performs and teaches bits from ‘Torobaka’, a duet with accomplished Spanish flamenco dancer Israel Galvan, which he is presenting across six cities.

The students are amused when Khan tells them that his hero worship went to the extent of walking the streets of south London like Michael Jackson. Son of Bangladeshi immigrants, restaurateur Musharaf Hussain Khan and teacher Anwara Mushida Khan, he grew up listening to

tales from Greek mythology and Mahabharata from his mother, and also reading Marvel comics. “There was a period I was scratching my skin to see if it was white underneath, because the superheroes were all white, and sometimes blond.” His mother was worried, and believed that kathak would be a “good distraction”.

At the age of seven, Khan began training in the Lucknow school of kathak with Pratap Pawar, a student of Pandit Birju Maharaj. Eleven years later, he would become Pawar’s *ganda-bandh shagird*, a ceremony in which a guru ties a sacred thread around the finest student, demonstrating faith in his or her abilities. “Kathak is everything—the way I think is through kathak and look at movement is through kathak,” he says. “It is a bit like religion. You don’t choose it, you are born into it.”

The Muslim community around which Khan grew didn’t mind him pursuing dance so long as he imitated MJ at competitions or danced at weddings and melas. “My mother said, ‘If you can command the attention of these people, who have children running around and who haven’t paid to be here, you are a star’.” But there was disapproval when as a 13-year-old Muslim he toured the world with Peter Brook’s production on Hindu epic Mahabharata. One of the youngest members in the cast, Khan played the boy to whom Ganesha narrates the tale. Returning after two years, he struggled to resume life in school.

Khan was already an outsider with his religion and skin colour; his dance background and the theatre break presented further challenges. “It was very tough, especially after I had absolute freedom,” he says. “At school, I didn’t tell anybody (that) I danced.” Khan “bunked” school for a year, choosing to practice kathak in his garage for up to 10 hours. When his parents finally discovered, it was decided that he needed to get a “degree” in dance.

Khan signed up for a performing arts course at De Montfort University in Leicester. Only, he





had no idea what contemporary dance meant. At 20, he was trying to make his body pick up a new movement idiom. Kathak came to his help. "I believe if you have classical training, you can do many things much more quickly than others," Khan says.

At the Northern School of Contemporary Dance in Leeds, ballet especially was gruelling. Khan was conscious that he didn't have the physique of a ballet dancer. "They told me, 'There is something different about you'." He began to explore his individuality. "Everything they thought I didn't do right, I celebrated that more," Khan tells the students of Kalakshetra, encouraging them to not be afraid of looking silly.

Highlighting his strengths and acknowledging his weaknesses is one of the factors that has led to his swift rise since he established his company in 2000. "There are much better kathak dancers than me," Khan says, and admits that he is not a "pure kathak dancer". But "kathak is his vitamin", says kathak dancer Gauri Sharma Tripathi, who collaborated with him on 'Polaroid Feet' and later on 'Sacred Monsters'. Delhi-based kathak dancer Aditi Mangaldas, who has seen many of Khan's works, including his acclaimed solo 'Desh', a tribute to his Bangladeshi identity, says, "With every production, he opens a new vista and draws you into imaginary worlds. He's not caught up in his fame. He dreams and creates magic. He is an ambassador for kathak."

A lot has changed since Khan's last trip to India in 2012. As opposed to 10 months, he now tours only six months. The dissolution of his first marriage to dancer Shanell Winlock made him realise that he needed to slow down. "I used to see her 20 days a year; that too not at one ago," he says. His two kids, Sayuri and Kenzo, and his Japanese wife Yuko Inoue, a retired dancer, are now priority. But dance continues to occupy him when he practises it for three hours a day. "I do it for myself. But I don't enjoy it as much anymore. It's more painful on the body." Khan gives himself another four years on stage, looking forward to a busier role as a choreographer.

If that's the case, it makes 'Torobaka' all the more special. He describes it as "absurd" and "surreal". But Khan is praying that Birju Maharaj doesn't come. Given that Delhi has two shows on October 12 and October 13, the possibilities are limited. "It will be traumatic," says Khan. "'Gnosis' was graceful and poetic. 'Torobaka' is very disturbing." It's a rare moment when Khan demonstrates nerves and reminds that despite all the acclaim, there is still a child in him eager to please.

Follow the writer on Twitter @suhani84

PET
TOPIC

Beyond dogs and cats, every country has its own fascination with certain animals

US

Fish is the most popular, with the country owning about 142 million aquatic pets—more than as many cats and dogs as pets combined.



CHINA

Since antiquity, the Chinese have had crickets (yes, the insect) as pets—primarily people keep crickets in cages and enjoy their singing.

JAPAN

Loves rabbits. No wonder, rabbit cafes are coming up in the country, where one can drink coffee, snuggle bunnies and buy their own pets from.



AUSTRALIA

Turtles, which thrive in the country's moderate climate, especially the easy-to-care long-necked variety. It is illegal to keep exotic (non-Australian) reptiles in captivity, though.



ARE DOGS JU

AS THE WOLF-LIKE PREDATORS EVOLVED INTO ITS MORE DOCILE VERSION, IT DEVELOPED MORE HUMAN TRAITS. A RAFT OF NEW SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Dogs can spot
your emotions

Like us, they are able to tell the difference between happy and angry facial expressions.
Current Biology, February 2015



AMITABH BACHCHAN

His beloved pet dog Shanouk, a Piranha Dane, regularly featured on the veteran actor's blog posts until it died in 2013.

New research shows when dogs stare into our eyes, they activate the same hormonal response that bonds us to human infants. *Science*, April 2015

Dogs understand
us in a way that
no other
animal does



Like humans and chimps, dogs can follow human gaze into blank space—a behaviour called 'check backs' or 'double looking'
Animal Behaviour, August 2015

Dogs can
follow your
gaze and
check back



Once thought to be too complex an emotion for nonhumans, dogs too can show jealousy and 'pay-attention-to-me' behaviours.
PLOS ONE, July 2014

Dogs get
jealous too



PRIYANKA
CHOPRA

Hates cats and adores her Cocker Spaniel, Brando, who has the habit of seeing her off every time she goes out.



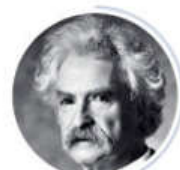
LITERARY PETS

These animals played a central role in the lives of some of the most famous authors



Charles Dickens

He had a talkative raven called Grip. When it died, Dickens had him taxidermied. It often appeared in his writing and is believed to have inspired Edgar Allan Poe's poem 'The Raven'.



Mark Twain

He was very fond of his daughter's cat, Bambino. When it disappeared for a few days, he gave an ad, offering \$5 for the "large and intensely black" cat, "not easy to find in ordinary light."

ST LIKE US?

SION OVER TENS OF THOUSANDS OF YEARS, THEY ALSO DEVELOPED EXPLAINS WHY WE FEEL SO MUCH IN TUNE WITH OUR DOGS.



SALMAN KHAN

is known to put shootings on hold whenever his pet dogs have been unwell. His debut production, *Chillar Party*, was a tribute to his dogs.

They are intelligent enough to recognise onscreen images of animals and TV dog sounds such as barking. *Animal Cognition*, 2013



Dogs can watch and react to TV

Believe It or Not

Scientists have found that dogs prefer to look at the left side of a human face. Is it because the left side of a person's face, controlled by the right brain responsible for emotions, is more expressive?

RANI MUKERJI

A pet lover and animal activist, she has been saving stray dogs all her life.



Dogs take sides by ignoring people who are mean to their owners

Just like us, dogs do people-watching, to figure out who's nice and who's not. *Animal Behaviour*, August 2015

SHAH RUKH KHAN

mourned the death of his pet dog, Dash, a Japanese Chin, in March. He tweeted: "Ultimate lov is the 1 u dont express...lik our lil Dash had. R.I.P."

We possibly select pets based on our own personality

Dog lovers tend to be more lively, energetic and outgoing than cat lovers. A 2014 study from Department of Psychology, Carroll University, Wisconsin

AISHWARYA RAI BACHCHAN

Takes to Twitter when her pet Labrador Retriever falls sick, asking her followers to pray for Spinee.



Elizabeth Barrett Browning

The Victorian-era poet wrote this about her Cocker Spaniel: "Flush is my constant companion, my friend, my amusement..."



T.S. Eliot

He always peppered his poetry with allusions to cats. His *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*, is about different personalities of cats. It also inspired Andrew Lloyd Webber's Broadway musical, *Cats*.



Ernest Hemingway

He called his 23 felines "purr factories". In 1953, when one of them, Uncle Willie, was crushed by a car, he wrote to a friend: "Have had to shoot people but never anyone I knew and loved for 11 years."

Graphic by PREM SINGH GIRI

PET TOPIC

BRITAIN

Is fascinated with reptiles and amphibians. Snakes, terrapins, frogs, geckos and bearded dragons overtook cats and dogs as favourite pets in 2008.



PERU

Alpacas, a type of smaller and cuter camel, about 3.5 million of which are alive today, is Peru's favourite.

GUATEMALA

The majestic macaw, with red, blue and yellow plumage and ability to mimic humans, is a prized pet in Guatemala.



MIDDLE EAST

Pigeons have been bred since ancient times. They are rising in popularity, mainly due to their versatility when it comes to breeding, creating new colourful types.



EYECATCHERS



HOLY TRAIL

Rebellious Flower, a film based on Osho, has won a Special Mention Jury Award at the Salento International Film Festival, Italy. Made by debutante director **Krishan Hooda**, the film narrates the story of Acharya Rajneesh and the traces of rebellion in him in his youth, which eventually led him to spirituality.



A FRESH START

Kangana Ranaut is all set to make the audience forget the disappointment that was *Katti Batti*. After she wraps up Vishal Bhardwaj's period romance, *Rangoon*, she will get down to playing a small-town girl who robs banks across California in *Simran*. The film will be directed by Hansal Mehta of *Shahid* fame.



SHINING STAR

Model-turned-VJ **Sarah-Jane Dias** had dabbled in films down South as well as a few in Bollywood but it is in independent cinema that she has finally found her calling. Her recent films, *Angry Indian Goddesses*, which finished second in the popular choice awards at the Toronto International Film Festival, and *Zubaan*, which opened the Busan Film Festival, have won her more recognition. While *Angry Indian Goddesses* will be screened at film festivals in Zurich and Rome, *Zubaan* is expected to release later this year in the country.

■ Compiled by **Suhani Singh** Follow the writer on Twitter @suhani84



WRITE CHOICE

Writer of the bestseller *The Female Eunuch* and academic **Germaine Greer** returns to Mumbai after more than two decades to take part in the Mumbai literary fest, Tata Literature Live! "I believe that everyone in the rich world needs regular exposure to the glory and the anguish that is India, and I need it right now," says Greer, talking about her participation in the event.



BACK IN BUSINESS

Akshaye Khanna's Bollywood break is finally coming to an end. Best known for his role in *Dil Chahta Hai*, the actor will be seen as a baddie in Varun Dhawan- and John Abraham-starrer *Dishoom* which will hit the theatres next year. He will also be seen on the small screen in the second season of Anil Kapoor's *24*.

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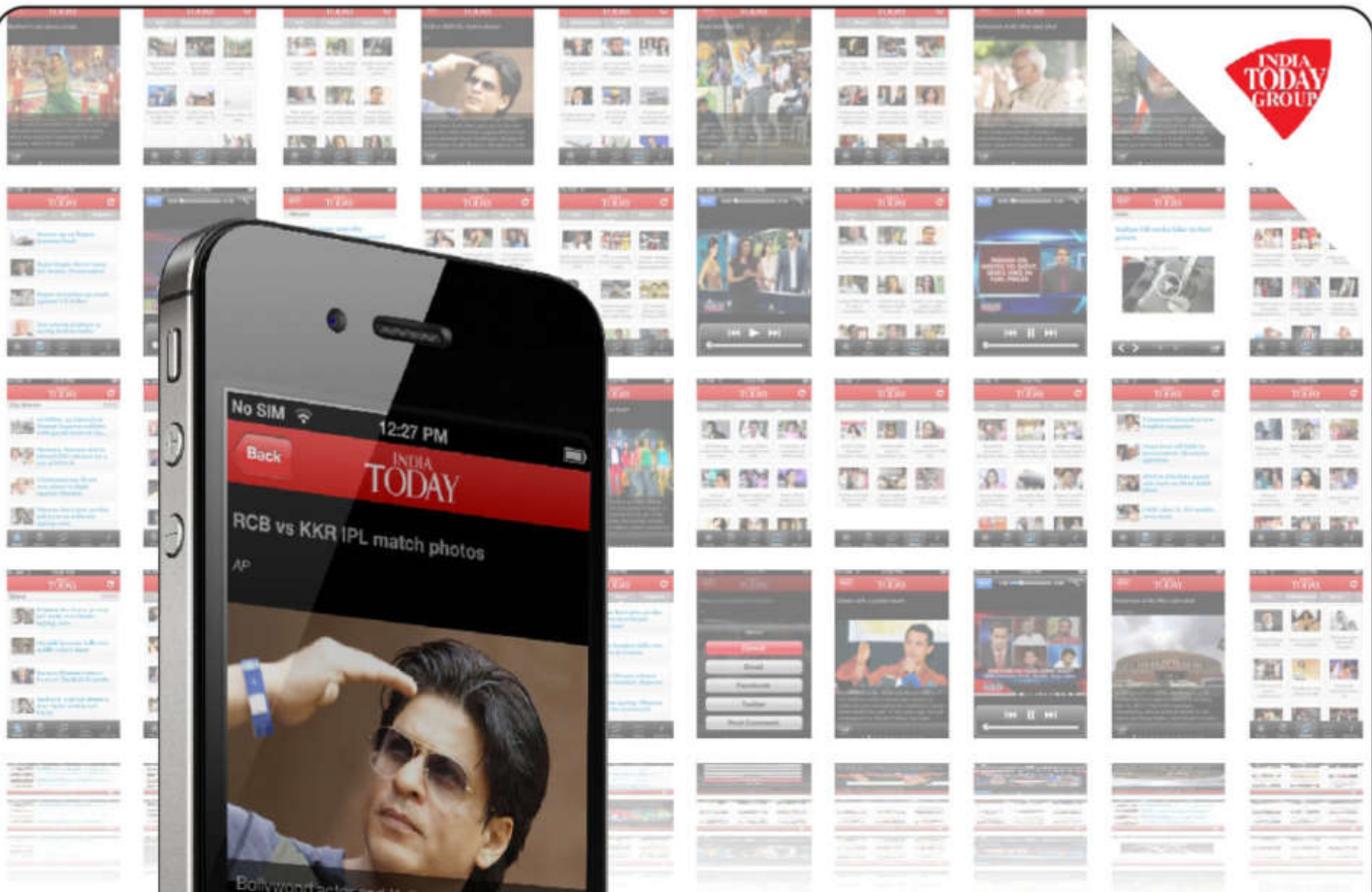
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(from left) Bipasha Basu,
Sussanne Khan and
Malaika Arora Khan, curators,
The Label Life

THE SHOWSTOPPERS



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MAKE-UP KAPIL BHALLA

MALAIKA ARORA KHAN

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How healthy is it to stay hungry and follow fad diets to lose weight?



IMAGES BAZAAR

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

READERS WRITE IN

- ✓ Fad diets not only deprive us of the essential nutrients, carbohydrates and good fat such as omega fatty acids, but also make us anaemic and fatigued. If you can't go to the gym, just stop the maid from running your house and do some of the work yourself. Sweeping or mopping can be a good workout. **Priya T. S, Chennai**
- ✓ Staying hungry is of no use. Fad diets can make one shed weight for some time, but they also make a person feel weak. If you stay hungry, it will not burn your fat but will definitely affect your digestive system. Instead of following such diets and starving oneself, it is best to have low-fat foods within small intervals of time. **Trisha Chatterjee, Delhi**
- ✓ We all are born with unique body types, therefore, fad diets can never be beneficial. One must eat healthy, with the right combination of proteins, carbohydrates and essential nutrients. Eating fresh fruits and vegetables at the proper time and in the right proportion can ensure a fit body. My advice is to stay happy, not hungry. **Sangeeta Rao, Delhi**



Ten winning letters from the India Today Woman online poll will receive a Lakme gift hamper. Winners will be notified by email. Letters may be edited for space and clarity.

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Where Fashion Gets Personal



(from left)
Malaika Arora
Khan, Bipasha
Basu and
Sussanne Khan

The Cult of Chic

IF ONE BREATHES FASHION, ANOTHER SHARES A CHORD WITH DESIGN, WHILE THE THIRD UNDERSTANDS ACCESSORIES. MALAIKA ARORA KHAN, SUSSANNE KHAN AND BIPASHA BASU COME TOGETHER FOR THE LABEL LIFE.COM, A SHOPPING PORTAL.

By SUHANI SINGH

It's Friday morning and interior designer Sussanne Khan's spacious and opulent store *The Charcoal Project* in Andheri, Mumbai, is brimming with activity. With two photo shoots lined up on different levels of the décor store, there is a lot of activity happening at the same time and there is not a single dull moment as stylists, hair and make-up artists, managers and publicists scurry about. Joining Khan on the premises, which is decorated with gargoyles, luxurious and antique furniture, artefacts and even a wall of metal chains, are Malaika Arora Khan and Bipasha Basu. Arora Khan is a model who is as well known for her sensuously performed moves to Hindi film songs such as *Munni Badnaam Hui* in *Dabangg* as her pouting selfies on Instagram with one of her besties, Kareena Kapoor Khan. Basu is a model-

turned-actor who has lately become the go-to heroine for horror-thriller movies. The three come from different walks of life but are all independent women who have been brought together as "tastemakers" and "creative directors" for the lifestyle website *thelabellife.com*, where Khan handles home décor, Basu the accessories and Arora Khan the apparel necessities. In a rebranding exercise, the portal requires them to work in sync to create a more harmonious and comprehensive lifestyle brand. Given the camaraderie they display whenever the cameras take a break, this shouldn't be hard. In an interview with *India Today Woman*, they talk

about what inspires them and share the latest trends and tips.

BIPASHA BASU, 36

Make-up, statement jewels, shoes and bags, The Trunk Label

► Describe your creative process when it comes to designing?

When it comes to product development, which according to me is all about designing and curating, I try to put my best creative foot forward. I work with my team, which is well in tune with accessory trends and latest happenings in the world of fashion. And I play the role of a personal stylist to all my customers.

► Tell us what inspires you the most?

I find inspiration in everything around me. It could even be the smallest of things such as a pearl necklace or a beautiful coloured stone.

► How long have you known Malaika Arora Khan and Sussanne Khan? Does that help in working with them?

I've known them for a long time now. Working together at *thelabellife.com* has made me conscious and happy about the similarities we share; I guess that's why we are all tastemakers. All three of us have built our careers ourselves. We have followed our own paths and been working women honing our skills from a young age.

THE THREE TASTEMAKERS, SUSSANNE KHAN, BIPASHA BASU AND MALAIKA ARORA KHAN, SHARE A SYNERGY THAT HELPS THEM BOND OVER FORM, DESIGN AND CONTEXT

“ I find inspiration in everything around me. It can even be the smallest of things like a pearl necklace or a beautiful coloured stone. ”

Bipasha Basu



Bipasha Basu makes a style statement

► **How important are accessories?**

Quite important. They always complement the clothes. As part of our Autumn Winter 2015-16 theme for the relaunch of the website, you will find accessories add that little edge to your wardrobe in the form of a statement necklace or an accent bag or a flirty charm bracelet.

► **Biggest faux pas that women make when accessorising?**

Going overboard with too many accessories. I do believe less is more. Curating a look as beautiful and unique as you is my role as a style guide. Sometimes even a simple bracelet can complete the look. Adorning oneself with the right accessories is more important.

► **Bipasha Basu's aesthetic for accessories?**

I like statement jewels to be subtle. I believe no outfit is complete without the right accessories. An accessory is the final touch that is needed to take you from day to night.

► **Favourite shopping hunting ground?**

London

SUSSANNE KHAN, 39

Furniture and home décor accessories, The Home Label

► **Coming from a creatively inclined family, with your mother being an interior designer, did you always have an appreciation for well-designed spaces?**

Yes. I was attracted to the world of interior design and architecture from a relatively young age. I must have been five years old when my mother, Zarine Khan, used to get magazines like *Architectural Digest* at home, and I used to go through them with great interest. I knew then that I

wanted to be a part of this exciting and creative world; design was in my every thought, and colour and form excited me tremendously.

► **What inspires you as an interior designer?**

I get inspired the most by the history of art and architecture all over the world. My other inspirations arise from nature, its several forms and shapes and from the colours in nature that blend together seamlessly. Besides these, metal, stone, glass and timber are some of the elements which when combined together using different patterns, are some of the sparks that ignite the designer in my head. The wonderful thing is that it keeps on changing according to my emotions and environment. Inspiration is basically a combination of different experiences for me.

► **Your personal aesthetic**

French, modern and luxurious interiors. Chic, pure materials and edgy shapes and texture-rich quiet luxury.

► **In its new avatar, the site sees increasing collaboration between you, Bipasha Basu and Malaika Arora Khan. How is it working with them?**

I have known them for a pretty long time now. It looks when three of us ideate together, something amazing always come out of it.

► **In the rebranding of the site, what can we expect from your latest collection?**

As part of our rebranding process, we will be sticking to the same brand philosophy and product categories as *The Home Label*, but we will be adding more categories like furniture. As all our three brands will be under one website, so customers will be able to explore fashion too.



Sussanne Khan is the queen of interior design

HAIR AND MAKE-UP: ZANOBIJA FOR KROMAKAY

“Even as a child, I knew that I wanted to be a part of this creative world. Design was in my every thought and colour and form excited me.”

Sussanne Khan

► **Faux pas people make while furnishing homes**

Not spending on good quality products.

► **Favourite interior designers and architects**

French designers Philippe Starck and Jacques Garcia;

American architect Frank Lloyd Wright and German-American architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe.

► **Pit stops for sourcing home décor products**

The world is my oyster and I continue to explore.

MALAIKA ARORA KHAN, 39

Clothes and fashion accessories, The Closet Label

► **Did you always know that one day you'd have your own clothing line?**

I started my modelling career at a time when we were the pioneers in an industry that was new; everyone was raw and maverick alike. We models used to do our own make-up and also style ourselves for the shoots. It was then that I



Glamorous and gorgeous Malaika Arora Khan

HAIR: SUSAN EMMANUEL; MAKE-UP: SUBHASH VAGAL

realised I loved putting things together. For the past decade, I have nurtured an interest in being able to give back this learning, and also provide fashion tips to the contemporary woman who knows what she wants.

► **What inspires you when it comes to styling?**

My biggest inspiration is the new Indian woman and everything about her—versatility, independence and of course style.

► **Has your stint as a model helped you?**

Being exposed to the fashion industry for a long time has helped me make a lot of decisions by myself. I have

sees increasing collaboration between you, Bipasha Basu and Sussanne Khan. Tell us about working with them?

We certainly are in sync since the very beginning hence we became tastemakers together. All three of us have been exposed to a working environment that demands good style, knowledge of trends and general lifestyle aesthetics. So we collectively work together with several ideas thrown in by our teams and us. The result is that we end up curating some really great, timeless collections.

► **What's your personal style?**

“Over-accessorising is the biggest mistake most people make. Look into the mirror one last time before you leave home and drop one thing. Be brutal.”

Malaika Arora Khan

learned from the people around me, from the stylists to designers and even my peers. Taking inputs from them has also helped me make better, sound decisions as a stylist rather than as a designer.

► **You have enjoyed and still hold on to the reputation of being one of the most glamorous women in India. How important is it then to come up with a collection that breaks this stereotype?**

As I always say, *thelabellife.com* develops complete looks for the discerning Indian woman right from clothes to accessories to make her feel glamorous and sexy. So my collections are premium, wearable and stylish for every occasion, which take you from day to night and from brunch to dinner with ease.

► **In the new avatar, the site**

Comfort. What you see right now is my work avatar. When at home, I am in shorts, chappals and no make-up.

► **Biggest weakness when it comes to shopping**

White shirts. I have them in all fits, sizes and styles.

► **Biggest faux pas people make when it comes to clothes**

Over-accessorising. I feel we wear too many things. Look into the mirror one last time before you leave home and drop one thing. Whether it's the bright coloured lipstick or the extra necklace. Be brutal.

► **our favourite designers**

Versace, Alice and Olivia and Cavalli

► **Your favourite pit stops for shopping for clothes**

I have recently discovered some stores in Capri, Italy. Else it is always Dubai.

Artist in Residence

PORTRAYAL OF STRONG WOMEN IS THE RECURRENT THEME IN ALL HER PAINTINGS, BUT JAYASRI BURMAN REFUSES TO BE BRANDED A FEMINIST

By CHUMKI BHARADWAJ

She extends a hesitant hand, backed only by a shy half smile; dwarfed in a voluminous salmon pink kurta, Jayasri Burman's diffident demeanour is in stark contrast to the bold candour of the women coronated in her paintings. Even though her art is festooned with the recurrent strains of mythology, nature and detail, the more you engage with them, and her, you realise that every little nuance is nudged by a complexity of layers that surprise as well as delight.

Dancing eyes, hidden well behind serious dark frames, are the only giveaway of the playfulness and spontaneity that are almost second nature to this Delhi-based artist. "I love to and often break out into dance with performing street musicians," she says, "but only when I am travelling abroad," she cautions. "If I couldn't paint, I would be a dancer." But she lasted only a couple of days at a formal dance school since she abhors routine, by her own admission. "Ritual by design is fine, but when instituted from above, I feel claustrophobic. I like living between the lines."

Much of that quiet rebellion shows up in the fantastical, almost lyrical imagery of her work. Inspired by the Indian folk element, it is her sensitive portrayal and original



Jayasri Burman at her studio in Okhla, Delhi

PHOTOGRAPH BY M ZHAZO

Dharitri (bronze sculpture, 94"x76"x78"), 2015

*Everything, every one of us
we stop, pause, freeze in time, reach out towards
nowhere in particular
because that is who we are, where we want to be.
A part of this magic universe
that cannot stop on its own
nor begin to be what we are not,
what we were never meant to be..*

*What holds us all together in that missing silence:
words that were never spoken,
songs that were never sung,
lines that were never drawn,
dreams that were never pieced together,
never again.*

Pritish Nandy, who has penned a poem for each of
the 14 bronze sculptures in the exhibition



renderings that make it reminiscent of an almost Felliniesque style of filmmaking, where dreams and reality are perceived as one experience. But Burman, 55, is loathe to encourage comparisons; the most obvious being the ones with artist uncle Sakti Burman. "I love *choto kaku* (Sakti Burman), but sometimes it's painful when people come up to me and say that your work is the same as his. If you see the chronology of my work, you will see no Sakti Burman. I am from Bengal, and like all Bengalis, have been brought up in the shadow of a culture that resonates with the mother goddess cult. Kali puja and Durga puja summoned the cultural milieu we grew up in. So if Sakti Burman draws a Durga or if I draw a Durga, why should it encourage comparisons? After all, Ganesh Pyne draws Durgas too," she says.

Burman believes such a misunderstood sentiment is the result of insufficient knowledge of an artist and their creative journey. "That's why, in an exhibition, I like to show my earlier works as well as the more recent ones so that an evolution can be traced and people can see your journey." In November this year, Gallery Sanskriti in Kolkata will host a mid-career retrospective of Burman's work spanning 20 years, including 14 sculptures and 52 paintings, rendered during the years from 1996 to 2015. The gallery will also launch *Antaryatra*, a book that explores the artist's journey through her eloquent canvases and sculptures, with a foreword by actor, Amitabh Bachchan.

Even though Burman has been painting for more than 30 years, she has chosen to showcase her work starting 1996 since she considers it a watershed year. "I came out and left everything behind in Kolkata, and for a year, I was constantly travelling, going for outdoor sketching to Shimla, Kulu, Manali, Odisha and Shilajhuri. I was searching and my work was changing and evolving. I was working with some detail, panelling, experimenting with pastels, and sometimes with bolder colours. Now I draw, and then pour a yellow tint over it and allow the colours to grow as the painting builds around it." This is the technique I chanced upon through travelling, experimentation and growth and this is the creative journey I want to highlight through the exhibition, she admits.

Burman's work has acquired an added grace and maturity over the years with a stronger control over colour and a more thoughtful usage. "Now I play with the platform and tones as my relationship with colour has gradually evolved." Creation is a continuous process and Burman submits to it as an everyday discipline. "I paint everyday; no day without a line; no Sunday in my life," she proudly admits. Ever since the day her son wanted to go abroad to study; Burman knew she would have to work hard to cobble together the resources. "I haven't stopped working since; everyday about 9-10 hours, sometimes I work as much as 15-19 hours a day." In fact, when her husband Paresh Maity is not around,

FROM BURMAN'S PALETTE

Earliest memory associated with art

The first art competition I entered in school in class three. My best friend Apuma, writer Purnendu Patri's daughter, got the first prize. I was happy for her but unhappy as to why I couldn't paint better. From that day on, I never let go of art. I knew I would be an artist so I would dress differently, paint my white canvas shoes with fabric paint. I romanticised the profession in my mind even before I ventured forth.

Favourite artist

Jogen Chowdhury, especially his cross hatch series, Ganesh Pyne, Ganesh Haloi, one of the best abstract artists in India who hasn't got his due. Some of Souza's work, K. G. Subramanyan.

On Paresh Maity's art

Nature prayed for this child and he was the result. When he is doing his water colours, he is like a child; so versatile.

Muse/inspiration

The Indian woman

Most indulgent buy

A Ravindra Reddy head; I saw the head in Art Today, and wanted it. Many years later, I worked, saved and bought it. Now, I play with it, sometimes I put a dupatta on her, see her expression or make her wear a hat if no one is home.



Bandhu Bari, 48"x48", pen and ink watercolour on arch paper

she works through the night. "In between, I put on music and start dancing and then go back to work, or I may go up to the terrace, look at the beautiful sky and return to work." Working long hours on such detailed work comes with its share of problems. With perpetually swollen fingers, and eyes that undergo a lot of strain, she realises that physically it may not be possible to give the kind of attention and energy to her paintings forever. "When I work, I put everything into it; I make today count."

Of course, living with an artist husband raises challenges that go beyond the physical limitations of intense hand work. At one level, it's easier living with an artist for we enjoy the same things. On

“Jayasri Burman's work is an inspiration—ethereal and yet worldly, divine and yet human. Once you step into Jayasri's world, you can look around and respond immediately to the unusual canons of beauty and partake of the choreography of the mythical universe in her drawings, sculptures and other works of art.”

Amitabh Bachchan

the other hand, there could be days without any conversation. "We appreciate the need for space and give each other the freedom to create." Arguments are pervasive in every family, but the important thing is to allow love to prevail over all else, even loss. Burman is no stranger to pain, having suffered five miscarriages, of which one was a still born, she is as stoic about the pain and the loss as she is grateful for the love and abundance.

It is this vivid mix of emotion that finds form in the women she so ardently expresses in her art. Women content in the bounties of life; free and in harmony with nature, whether enticing as a mermaid, compassionate as a mother goddess or mystical as a creature of the woods.

STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART

Inspirational, intimate and confessional are the ways to sum up the India Today Woman Summit 2015



“Even though you see many strong women who are coming up and taking a stand, there are an equal number of patriarchal stereotypes raising their ugly heads.”

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN

MOS (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

“In Bollywood, women don't do many action films; it would be good to set the trend.”

AMY JACKSON

ACTOR



“Women from villages choose to let their husbands do their work and take charge instead of learning the laws and duties of a panchayat leader. We need to support these women sarpanches.”

MANEKA GANDHI

MINISTER FOR WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT



“Comedy is the strongest form of dissent.”

ADITI MITTAL

STAND-UP COMEDIAN



“ Assisted reproduction is a plausible alternative to pregnancy, helping surrogate mothers who mostly come from underprivileged backgrounds. It should not be seen as an exploitative practice by society. ”

DR FIRUZA PARIKH
ASSISTED REPRODUCTION
SPECIALIST



“ When I had my sex change operation, friends and family moved away. However just as pond scum settles once the ripple is gone, they made their peace with who I am. ”

MANABI BANDOPADHYAY
INDIA'S FIRST
TRANSGENDER PRINCIPAL



“ Women don't believe they can be thin enough. ”

RUJUTA DIWEKAR
NUTRITIONIST

“ While I am not propagating deceit, women need to be smart when getting married and not be blinded by love. ”

MRUNALINI DESHMUKH LAWYER



INDIA TODAY WOMAN AWARDS



INDIA TODAY WOMAN OF STYLE
ADITI RAO HYDARI,
ACTOR



INDIA TODAY WOMAN IN SPORT
APURVI CHANDEL,
SHOOTER



INDIA TODAY INSPIRATIONAL WOMAN
BIBI SANDEEP KAUR, MOTHER
OF 80 ADOPTED DAUGHTERS



INDIA TODAY WOMAN INNOVATOR
DR PRACHI PAWAR,
PRESIDENT, NEELVASANT MEDICAL
FOUNDATION AND RESEARCH
CENTRE



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HEMLATHA ANNAMALAI,
FOUNDER AND CEO, AMPERE
VEHICLES



INDIA TODAY WOMAN OF THE YEAR
IRA SINGH,
2014 UPSC TOPPER



INDIA TODAY WOMAN AS STORYTELLER
JUHI CHATURVEDI,
SCREENWRITER



INDIA TODAY WOMAN IN SCIENCE
NANDINI HARINATH,
PHYSICIST, DEPUTY OPERATIONS
DIRECTOR OF THE MARS ORBITER
MISSION



INDIA TODAY WOMAN BRAVEHEART
LT KIRAN SHEKHAWAT
(POSTHUMOUS),
NAVAL OFFICER

Beauty and the Bulge

ACTOR BHUMI PEDNEKAR ON HOW TO HAVE A BODY-POSITIVE ATTITUDE AND A HEALTHY BODY TO GO WITH IT

By ANINDITA SATPATHI

Lip service isn't her cup of tea and hypocrisy leaves a sour taste in her mouth. Having barrelled into Bollywood with *Dum Laga Ke Haisha*, the feisty and fabulous Bhumi Pednekar is a poster girl for all the right things. Ask about weight issues, what to eat and self-confidence and she's game, ticking off items on her non-obsessive, non-compulsive diet gleefully. Her mantra for coolness is premised on body confidence. Being fat is a state of mind as much as the body. Pednekar whittles it down to self-acceptance and healthy eating habits as the trick to feel good and look even better. Here's her foolproof formula for staying bold and beautiful.

Identify your motivation

Once you have that one motivating reason to lead a healthier lifestyle, you get rid of the tomorrow syndrome. I remind myself everyday in the morning, irrespective of how I feel, that I cannot skip a visit to the gym. Don't wait for a Monday; I have waited for a Monday for a really long time of my life. The trick is to do it today. There are days when I force myself to



Bhumi Pednekar oozes confidence

go to the gym and I do not work out. I just take some steam sauna and come back, but it's a part of the routine and it means I can't take it for granted.

Find your own pace

Don't listen to what anyone else has to say about you except perhaps the people you care about. You are the best judge; being empowered is about taking decisions on your own. Don't let the impetus for change come from an external source. Chances are you'll lose patience with it in a few weeks. I used Google search and my mother's vast knowledge on food to lose weight.

Foster happiness

Don't push yourself into a zone where you set unachievable targets for yourself. I was able to lose weight in a happy state of mind because I would not starve myself. I had a cheat meal every five days. I had ghee, butter, buttermilk and the only thing I stopped having completely was sugar. I followed my regular diet and exercised portion control. It wasn't hard at all because I grew up with eating habits that always prioritised nutrition over taste, thanks to my mother. So always make it a point to keep your diet consistent with the sort of food you grew up eating. I had two rotis for lunch, sabzi, dal and normal stuff. And, I was particular about not bingeing.

Don't give up too soon

Dieting is so easy these days because you have healthy options for every food type.

Go on to the internet and read about other people who have systematically lost weight. It is quite possible that a similar process may not work for you, but you may just get to a point where you pick up momentum because of the changes you perceive in your body.

Combine health concerns with weight loss

Control your carbohydrate intake. It sounds fancy but I calculated it without going to a dietician. You don't

of fat-shaming. I have been around women who are so content with the way they are. Shanoo (casting director for Yash Raj Studios), for example, is a plus size woman. When you look at her, you just see poise, confidence and beauty. She walks in like she owns the place. People like that inspire you to be what you are.

Respect differences

Everyone's health quotient is not the same. People have

physical appearance. Stop giving people around you importance. It all comes down to self-acceptance.

Incorporate activity in your lifestyle

If you don't like going to the gym, you always have the option of taking up a dance class or playing badminton, swimming or going for a walk. Just be active because even those 20 minutes make a huge difference. It's never about your physical health; your mental health is at stake too. Working out or going for a run can be the only time that you spend with yourself.

Take time out to smell the flowers

A film like *Dum Laga Ke Haisha* would not have been accepted five years ago. I was no stereotype actor; I was big and I was new. I didn't even do my hair and make-up. The only reason it became a hit is because people think differently now. I'm not negative about where we are today. I think it's only going to progress from here on. The Indian mindset is becoming more accepting and while we still have a long way to go, I think we are definitely on the right track.

Love your body type

I have always been content with my body type and that comes from self-acceptance. Figure out a style that works for your body type. Dress up or dress down, whatever rocks your boat. Stop being around people who only seem to be able to talk about superficial things.

**STOP TELLING YOUR SISTERS,
CHILDREN, FRIENDS AND
MOTHERS THAT THEY NEED
TO LOSE WEIGHT. YOU ARE
NOT DOING THEM A
FAVOUR. IF IT'S SOMEONE YOU
CARE ABOUT, MAKE SURE
SHE'S EATING HEALTHY.**

realise how much food that 90 gram of carbohydrate includes if you don't divide it properly. It took me four days to come up with a plan and be able to fit everything in. All you need to do is take a little time out for yourself and follow it.

Don't judge by weight

Stop telling your sisters, children, friends and mothers that they need to lose weight. You're not doing them a favour. If it's someone you care about, by all means make sure she's eating healthy but never let it take on the connotations

different metabolic rates and different body types altogether. As Sandhya in *Dum Laga Ke Haisha*, I was much bigger than what I am now. There was no compulsion to lose weight but I wanted to and now I feel better physically. I have no aches and pains, I'm not losing hair and there's no discolouration on my face. I breathe better and can wear heels for 20 hours.

Look and feel beautiful

It's absolutely fine to worry about how you're looking; what is wrong is being judged on the basis of



IN TOP FORM

TRAINERS WHO ARE USING
UNCONVENTIONAL WORKOUTS TO HELP
PEOPLE STAY FIT AND HEALTHY

MANSI GULATI

FACE YOGA INSTRUCTOR,
HYDERABAD, 28

"Did you know that you can look upto a decade younger simply by following 15 minutes of face yoga everyday," shares Mansi Gulati who promotes face yoga or yoga asanas as a natural replacement to botox and surgeries. "Even make-up," she insists.

BENEFITS Participants in her workshops endorse that the yoga form works quite well on correcting a double chin and helps in firming cheeks, besides helping in other skin-related issues. "Even a week of practice can enliven dull skin and is deeply healing," says Gulati. Teaching yoga for the last 15 years, Gulati has made it her "life goal" to help as many people as possible to discover the positive impact that yoga can have on the

body and mind. Interestingly, crowned Mrs India Asia International 2015, Gulati was the only participant who didn't wear make-up in the pageant, using instead, simple kitchen recipes like crushed strawberries for blush. She is looking forward to conducting workshops and starting her own yoga centres across India over the next few years. "I want to do my small bit in rekindling our pride in the yogic traditions of India," says Gulati who is a certified yoga trainer and has trained at yoga centres in Kerala and Bihar.

CHANGING OUTLOOK

As a single parent to a nine-year-old, she says yoga gave her a new direction in life. "Yoga is not just for the physical body but for mental health and emotional well-being too. A disciplined practice is truly life altering," she says.

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By Mona Ramavat

PHOTOGRAPH BY KRISHNENDU HALDER

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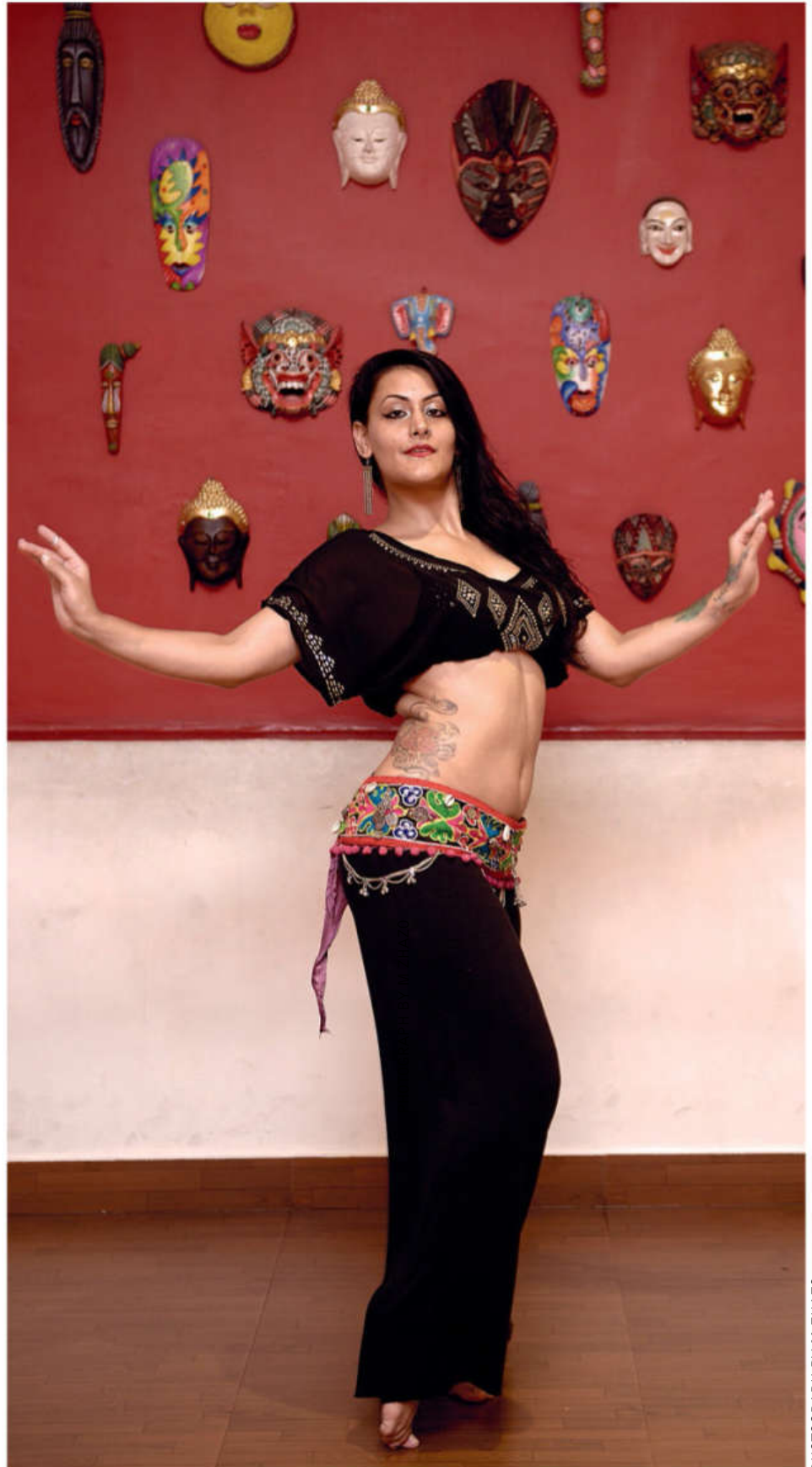
FOUNDER, BANJARA
SCHOOL OF DANCE,
DELHI, 26

Meher Malik shot to fame in 2009 when she gracefully did a belly dance performance on the stage of *India's Got Talent*, a popular reality television show. For the Indian audience that is unaware of the Maya and Taqsim, the two well-known moves in belly dance, Malik's performance stood out from the rest. Her father used to work in the Gulf and having spent 17 years in Oman, she was inevitably drawn to Arabic culture. She convinced her parents to send her to a belly dance festival in London when she was sixteen; since then she decided to dedicate herself to the dance form. "It took me one year to learn the basics and three years to get the dance in my bones," says Malik. This Egyptian oriental dance form is one of the oldest in the world and considered to be the most sensuous as well. It involves moving the torso and hips in circular movements to the rhythm of the music. "This dance synchronises the body movements with the beats of the music. It has a meditative quality to it. If not a belly dancer, I would have been a yogini for sure," says Malik.

BENEFITS Belly dance is a workout that is very accepting of a woman's body. It makes the uterine walls strong, thereby reducing menstrual cramps, easing labour pains and also toning the body post-pregnancy.

STAYING HEALTHY "Lead a holistic lifestyle. Live and think healthy. Eat smaller meals and drink lots of water and green tea," says Malik.
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By Ursila Ali



PHOTOGRAPH BY M ZHAZO



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VIJAYA TUPURANI

ZUMBA INSTRUCTOR,
HYDERABAD, 38

There's a sense of boundless energy surrounding Vijaya Tupurani as she begins her zumba class. It seems to be the same after an hour of energetic moves involving dance and aerobics with close to 800 calories burned. "I conduct at least three classes a day," says Tupurani catching her breath and clearly on a high, "the sort that comes from living your passion everyday." A dance enthusiast, she started dancing from the age of three and learnt Bharatnatyam and Kuchipudi besides salsa and hip-hop. A stay-at-home mother to her

eight-year-old twins till 2012, it was a flash mob that changed everything, she says. She spontaneously choreographed some moves with a zumba instructor friend at the flash mob and that's how her interest in the dance form grew. After she got her certification in 2012, "everything seemed accelerated and before I knew, I already had a few classes lined up." Today, her classes are quite popular with students, homemakers and corporates alike. A packed schedule usually leaves her with barely any time for anything else, but she manages to be home when her children are back from school. She seldom takes time off, unless her husband, a

colonel serving in the Indian army, is home. Her face lights up at the mention of her husband and she says, "his constant motivation and support" has brought her this far.

DISPELLING MYTHS Besides training her students, she also helps them break myths about fitness and their bodies. "Zumba works for pretty much anyone regardless of age or current fitness levels," she says, dispelling the idea that you need to be a dancer to be able to practice zumba. "As long as you are enjoying the moves, it doesn't matter if you've never danced before."

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By Mona Ramavat



PHOTOGRAPH BY KRISHNENDU HALDER



REEMA SARIN

FOUNDER, BOLLYFIT,
DELHI, 45

Armed with a masters degree in business management from University of California, Berkeley, US, Reema Sarin was all set to work in the corporate sector and even landed a job with a MNC in Singapore. However, months into her new job, she realised that it wasn't her calling and made her way back to India in 2003. Sarin, confesses to being an adrenaline junkie ever since she was a teenager, from running marathons to participating in step aerobic

workshops. It was her quest for fitness but that took her to gyms and fitness classes around the world. When she came back from Singapore, the Indian pop music industry was witnessing major changes with Bollywood music becoming more fast paced. Sarin who is also an avid fan of Bollywood music had a eureka moment. She founded Bollywood in 2003, a glamorous high intensity nightclub workout set to beats of Bollywood music that touched 200 beats per minute (whereas other songs only achieved upto 140 beats per minute). "It took me some time to sit with DJs in India and see how we could use Bollywood music with aerobics to

create a fast-paced workout. The collaboration resulted in creation of one of the fastest workouts in the world which was more intense than zumba or aerobics, but it is also a creative way to lose weight as it incorporates a lot of Bollywood moves and follows no set routine," says Sarin.

BENEFITS It helps in toning the ABT (abs, buttocks and thighs) and if done for an hour, one can lose upto 700 calories. Since music determines the steps of the workout, no two workouts are the same, making the routine less monotonous.

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By Ursila Ali



LEENA MOGRE

PERSONAL TRAINER,
MUMBAI, 53

Leena Mogre may be synonymous with celebrity fitness in India, but none of it would have been possible if she hadn't been pushed by her mother to join the gym as a young girl. "She felt that I was too short and working out would help me get taller," recalls Mogre. This is how she was introduced to weight training, something she advocates wholeheartedly even today. The celebrity trainer's first foray into the fitness industry was in the early 90s, a time when Jane Fonda's videos were all the rage. "At the time, being a fitness trainer wasn't considered a lucrative job," she says.

SETTING TRENDS With Mogre's focus on weight training and building lean muscle tissue, she made it sexy for women to be muscular. "But even now a lot of women get scared of lifting weights. They would rather go for a walk or do yoga. Weight training coupled with a good balanced diet is important as it helps ward off osteoporosis and helps increase your metabolic rate," she says. Her regime emphasises on different forms of weights—cable, TRX, free weights or circuit training—at least three times a week. She also practices other forms of exercises such as spinning and power yoga.

STAYING HEALTHY Lifestyle management is the key to fitness, which means you've to start by making changes in your habits. Don't experiment with random diets. Your friend's body is different from yours, just because something works on her doesn't mean it'll work for you too.

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By Moeena Halim

PHOTOGRAPH BY SHIVANGI KULKARNI

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GAURAV ARORA
"When I was fat, I had no
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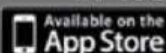
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INDIA
TODAY

A MONTHLY CITY MAGAZINE

SIMPLY CHENNAI



A FASHIONABLE
TWIST
DESIGNERS WHO ARE
WEAVING A CHANGE

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AND MOHAMMED
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Photograph by JAISON G

COVER STORY

Reinventing Couture **s-4**

A breed of designers stick to their craft and develop an aesthetic on their own terms

BUZZ

Into the city **s-12**

Find out what to do, what to shop for and where to eat.

Cover photo by JAISON G

OUR PICK of the month

Music for the Soul October 11

Join the pop sensation and singer extraordinaire, Ankit Tiwari, as he takes you on a musical odyssey. The singer will be crooning his most loved Bollywood hits like *Sunn Raha Hai*, *Tu Hai Ki Nahi* and the chart-topping hit, *Teri Galliyan*. Tiwari will also be joined live by Shefali Alvares, known for her club hits, *O Gujariya* and *Subah Hone Na De*. Tickets available at bookmyshow.com At YMCA Royapettah Tel 28589397



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REINVENTING COUTURE

A NEW BREED OF DESIGNERS
STICK TO THEIR CRAFT
AND DEVELOP AN AESTHETIC
ON THEIR OWN TERMS

By SARANYA CHAKRAPANI

Homegrown Style

FIBIN V RAJ 33, MOHAMMED IMAAD, 26



HEY MADE AN EDGY DEBUT UNDER THE

starlit August sky this year, showcasing their collection on Moroccan blue boats that rowed across the Adyar River. And as much as this made them seem like the most promising new designers on the block, Fibin V Raj has more surprises in store. Raj came to Chennai from

Kerala in 2002, to study at NIFT and found his first moments of inspiration in Auroville, Puducherry, where design heads from around the world united to work and learn at The Colours of Nature, a manufacturer of natural dyed textiles for garments. "I didn't want to work in an industry that mass manufactured garments. Rather, my mind was on learning the techniques involved in developing garments—from dying to embroidery—my projects were related to traditional Indian textiles," he says. Raj met Imaad at the Pearl Academy of Fashion, while working as a guest lecturer. Imaad's styling and design sensibilities found prospect in his plans to start their own label and they started working on it over eight months ago. Tamil Nadu's cottons and the korvai weaving technique of its Kanjeevarams have found a fan in Raj, who tells us he aspires to see Chennai take more credit for its textile heritage.

SIGNATURE ELEMENTS 3D structures, architectural features and patterns, transferred onto textured fabrics and jacquard weaves.

Price Rs. 2,000 onward

Contact 9884253918



Fibin v Raj (left) and
Mohammed Imaad
showcasing their collection





Photograph by JAISON G



Designers Ekta Nahar and Sandeep Ravi



The Trendsetters

SANDEEP RAVI, 25,
EKTA NAHAR, 24

IF THERE'S, ONE THING A CREATIVE mind should be, it's restless. Sandeep Ravi left his visual merchandising job in 2012, after he could no longer cater to brands with their specific agendas and needs. He wanted to start a brand that did something new every day and never once glued on to a comfort zone.

And soon, he converted his house into a studio and began designing for friends and family. "We didn't want to market, do a show or invest too much into it. We worked with minimum resources, and till date, haven't believed in going out there, creating a bang and telling the world we exist. Our work creates the buzz we need and that's how we get clients," says Ravi. Word however got moving around faster after they opened their studio, Studio 9696 in May 2012, and got their big break with Yash Raj Films' *Aaha Kalyanam*—their first styling project, a few months later. That's where Ravi met his now business partner Ekta Nahar and they decided to take the brand forward. "The Yash Raj project was a huge deal for us, because we learnt abundantly from it. We had to dress up nearly 200-300 people every day, and sometimes, in continuity, wherein they would shoot the same song for three days. This meant we had to dress up the same people in the same way for three days," says Nahar. The project opened up unexplored avenues for Ravi and Nahar in styling for Kollywood, and for ad shoots.

SIGNATURE ELEMENTS Quirk factor with different cut lines, textures and surface techniques. Denim blouses that can double up as crop tops with a skirt.

Cost Rs 4,000 onward
Contact: 8939275990

Designer Sidney Sladen (centre) showcasing his collection



Keeping it Real

SIDNEY SLADEN,

27



THERE ARE MANY WAYS A DESIGNER

celebrates his ten-year stint in a largely self-sustained fashion industry. Sidney Sladen did it by pouring his heart out into what he calls his biggest show so far, 'Breakaway 2015'. What adds an edge to it is that the show came after "a two-and-a-half year lull of loss and split relationships. As a boy Sladen remembers being sent out of the class for drawing designs at the back of his school books. He kept the fire burning till he started working with Sunil Menon years later. In the recent years, Sladen has moved out of his familiar ground of western silhouettes and made a foray into Indian wear, which he says today sells about 15 percent more than the former. "People initially believed we only did western wear and only dressed skinny people. But fashion is about how many of your designs transform into wearable clothes, and if you

look at our models, they have to be a 35 bust as a rule; they're rarely a 33 or below," says Sladen. "If my generation grew up admiring sensual women such as Rekha and Sridevi, the next generation looks for it in Kim Kardashian," he adds. Sladen is among those who has little to take away from an extravagantly funded fashion week. In fashion weeks, no one is looking at the buyer. "In fashion weeks, no one is looking at the buyer. If three to four talented designers can put their egos aside and bring out their best collection on a single platform, it can bring together photographers, fashion editors and bloggers from all over the world," he says.

SIGNATURE ELEMENTS Vibrant colours, florals, thread work with anchor, zari patterns and fabrics lined with cotton

Price Rs 7,000 onward

Contact 9962869419

On the Rise

SRUTHI KANNATH, 27

FOR AS LONG AS SHE CAN REMEMBER, Sruthi Kannath has had a ball making people look stunning. "As a girl I always seemed to have a tip up my sleeve for a quirky accessory or hairdo for my friends. I'm glad I stuck to this fancy because years later it landed me the opportunity to style people for their most important days," she laughs. However, her fashion journey mainstreamed after a NIFT degree, when she decided the best way to make a foray into a highly contending scene like fashion, was to first build a solid base. "My constant exposure to fashion shows and events in the city inspired me to add fodder to my own designing dreams and I started with designing children's wear and unique blouses for women for their wedding sarees," says Kannath. Four years later, she launched her label Couture K in March 2014 and opened her studio at the same time. Kannath belongs to a generation that has (as seasoned designers would say) had it easy, all thanks to social media, but hard at the same time

because of the cutthroat competition. "The saleability of your garment is sacrosanct, and this holds true even for designs that I may create for a fashion week later in my career. In fact, in an event like that, I would keep aside the bright Kanjeevarams that are typically used to represent the state, and instead bring back some old, native south Indian colours such as ruby red, sapphire blue and emerald green, which are hardly seen today," she says.

Kannath is now primarily into bridal wear and styling for the Tamil film industry. She enjoys a famed clientele in cinema as a personal stylist for actor Jeeva and a consultant for many others. Kannath's specialty in bridal wear lies in the quirk she lends to it with the use of unconventional fabrics and materials.

SIGNATURE ELEMENTS Out-of-the-box elements such as shells, feathers and mirror work in bridal wear and mix-n-match fabrics.

Price Rs 2,000 onward

Contact studiocouturek@gmail.com

↓ Designer Sruthi Kannath



Photograph by JAISON G





Designer Vivek
Karunakaran at his store

Photograph by JASON G

Fun with Fashion

VIVEK
KARUNAKARAN, 35



“BEING FROM THE SOUTH, OVER-THE-TOP style isn't our thing,” Vivek Karunakaran says aloud on what makes his home city and its customer base exclusive. “Chennai draws a parallel to the aesthetic we follow—minimal, but with great attention to detail that makes every line special,” he says. Karunakaran, who earlier retailed under his eponymous brand ‘VivekKarunakaran,’ joined hands with wife Shreya in 2006, to re-launch but with a new label—‘Viia,’ now again re-branded ‘Vivek Karunakaran.’ Over the years, the duo has designed for celebrities such as Sonam Kapoor, Amy Jackson, AR Rahman, Anil Kapoor and Leander Paes.

His design influence lies in creating simple, minimalistic clothes, with an edge that could be lent through the textiles used or the textures created. With an aesthetic that's firmly rooted in this idea, Karunakaran has coined

the terms ‘gorgeous and edgy’ for his women's wear and ‘classic and edgy’ for his menswear lines respectively. In addition to being home to his flagship store—set up in 2013—Chennai is close to the designer's heart for being the foundation for his aspirations. Karunakaran tells us he has a vision to see the fashion scene here grow by leaps and bounds in the coming years. “Chennai as city and its people need to evolve in their thinking of what we are capable of. While there's a lack of confidence in what we do, at times there's also a lack of wanting to do better,” he says. Vivek Karunakaran is now planning its foray into Indian wear, which as he promises, “will also be full of surprises”

SIGNATURE ELEMENTS Clothes that can be worn regardless of the year; classics that are fun and edgy.

Price Rs 4000 onward
Contact 9003295442

THE FASHION ROADMAP

FASHION WEEKS OFFER GROUND TO EXCHANGE IDEAS AND GROW IN YOUR CRAFT

Almost two decades ago, when no Instagram, Twitter or Facebook were around to promptly put across our ambition for the world to see and instantly review, the only way to make foray into the fashion designing space was brick by brick. And the first brick in my self-taught journey was a day job with Colorplus, which I pursued alongside a college degree. For three years, I worked at the Colorplus factory in Ambattur from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and then rush to college where I was pursuing economics.

I then started assisting with styling for Tamil films and doing clothes for the girls who went for Miss India; from Trisha to Shweta

Jaishankar, who was the second runner-up at the Miss international pageant in Japan. I also did a year's course in Bangalore for cutting and stitching—something I thought was vital to build my fundamentals.

Today, we do have the best designers retailing in the country, hailing from Chennai. We have stores such as Evoluzione, Collage and Amethyst who bring together all the talent under one roof. There are more fashion and design institutes now than ever, producing over 200-300 students a year. And yet it's quite surprising that we don't have too many designers from Chennai who have made a significant mark in the national market. I'm more disheartened to find no young name from the city popping up nationally.

► **ORIGINALITY IS THE KEY** In this day and age, despite the availability of technology and accessibility to resources, it's true that the younger lot has it as much harder. For starters, launching your own label is an expensive process and requires heavy investment. And it only gets much harder to showcase nationally. In Wills, for instance, the selection process is such that they review your entire collection every single time. Whereas with Lakme, you just need to show the a few pieces of your garments, and not the whole collection.

There's very high competition too, and that is precisely why I keep pushing young designers to be more original and edgy, especially on the runway, even if they're doing a commercial line. I don't see them bending the rules and doing something quirky in terms of silhouettes. They tend to be following a trend, instead of creating one.

Nobody wants to keep seeing a ghagra or an anarkali on the runway. Also, anyone can do a shirt, a bandi or a bandgala. Instead, experiment with cuts and fabrics, develop your own print, don't make every piece look like a Sabyasachi rip-off. It is highly imperative to make your own statement at a show.

Even when you start off as a stylist, it definitely helps if you can design as well. In films you do source a lot – particularly for song sequences – so it helps in a great way if you have the eye to detail and the aesthetic to create something unique. Even today, I don't recommend that fashion students start their label

Chaitanya Rao with a model wearing his creation



Photograph by FELIX CALIS

immediately out of an institute. It's not easy getting out your own label in the first place. Even with ample backing, it requires constant and strenuous brand building. That's why, working with international labels and doing internships goes a long way.

In fashion weeks, the pressure is also there to be original. You can't be ripping off a popular designer—which is to say that you cannot show blatant influences from his/her work—on that runway. I see a lot of the younger designers doing this. I'm thinking, you're a designer yourself, why would you want to rip off another one? In films sometimes even I'm put in a fix. They show me a reference of Manish Malhotra or Sabyasachi and I take a call then and there that I cannot do it. After all, we do come across opportunities to share the same platform with those designers many times.

► **BRAND BUILDING** The whole experience of showing at a fashion week in Delhi, Mumbai or Europe is great, because you're on a much vaster platform. Having said that, there is a defi-

IT'S NOT EASY GETTING OUT YOUR OWN LABEL IN THE FIRST PLACE. EVEN WITH AMPLE BACKING, IT REQUIRES CONSTANT AND STRENUOUS BRAND BUILDING

nite bias towards the south and no one can deny that. Designers from Mumbai and Delhi have the advantage of getting the press on a national level; not to mention the kind of hype and PR that is available to them. Even when something relatively small gets done on the fashion scene, it gets national coverage. When we go for a fashion week to these cities, we finish showcasing and come back here. But after, that whatever happens in Chennai stays in Chennai.

People need to understand fashion weeks; what the process is like. We've got three supposed ones in Chennai. But the whole point of a fashion week—even the ones held nationally—is to get the right mix of people from around the country. In a fashion week, you have the buyers on the one side and the editorial on the other.

Sometimes, especially in India, it's hard to get the buyers, because most of them are multi-designer stores who want it on consignment, which means you have to put in your money on it. But what is important is that even if you don't get the buyers, you need to get in people from the editorial side. You need to edit the collection that you're showing, you can't

just put up something casually on the ramp.

Everyone's talks about how Chennai's fashion scene is dull, but when you keep putting up collections that are not up to the mark, you're encouraging that mediocrity. Even when we showcase for Lakme, if they feel a garment is not worth going on the ramp, it is not shown. It's as clear as that. Even if there are six good pieces, use them, instead of doing 30 bad ones.

► **NATIONAL RECOGNITION** Delhi is much more organised, primarily because you have many of the biggest exporters there and Mumbai fares high because of its availability of talent and proximity to Bollywood. It's a good idea for the organisers to get a stylist from Mumbai or Delhi who can edit our collections. The point of doing this is also that someone from the national level can see first-hand what is being done here. Two years ago, when I showcased for Swarovski, Little Shilpa, who makes these amazing head gears and is also a stylist, saw my work. She pulled out a piece she really liked and used it for a Vogue photoshoot. When you catch people from a national level, they will put you on a national platform. It's as simple as that. If you keep doing it in the city with each of us stroking the other's ego, then you're just living in that little cocoon.

Another important aspect is the pricing. People here do not spend as much as Delhi does. They do spend on luxurious sarees and jewellery. But for them to spend as much on and a well-cut couture gown? I don't think so. Designers here also don't promote their own talent. They too are fascinated by something that's not available here. Even the people who usually buy designer wear think that because you're here you have to be cheaper. That's our Catch 22 situation; if it's available here, you take it for granted. Fashion weeks are more of a meeting point of the people in the industry through whom you carry out your work later. Most of the business comes from international buyers. In addition, in Chennai you're also competing with the high-street brands whose prices we just cannot make garments at. They're able to give you a dress for Rs 2,000, because they do the volumes. Our stitching cost barely suffices within that. In spite of all these odds, there's terrific scope for our designers because of the sheer talent they possess. The younger ones should travel extensively, go to fashion weeks in different cities, observe their backstage and always push their own bar higher. That and a good dose of prudence will do the trick.

Chaitanya Rao is a fashion designer



Photograph by JAISON G

8 THINGS TO LOOK FORWARD TO

1 A Plateful of West Coast

Jonah's Goes to Malabar Coast is positioned promisingly in Anna Nagar East, a neighbourhood that loves eating out and is already home to some of Chennai's best experimental restaurants. The restaurant has Chef Anand of Cornucopia and Crimson Chakra, whipping up classics with a twist, from Mangalore, Kerala, Goa and a teeny bit of Karnataka. Chef Anand's menu traverses these culinary lines with ease and style. We loved his take on the Karida Yetti, a Karnataka specialty with prawns marinated in Kundapur spices, Nadan Kozhi Curry—a Kerala chicken curry with ground spices and the fragrant Pachakari stew with appams.

However, we'd have loved to be shown more of their divergent seafood variety, considering it's also the strongpoint of Jonah's first-ever Indian coastal experiment. The white interiors are cheerful and innovative.

Meal for two Rs 900

At 131, Block 3, T-1 Yesesi Building, 4th Main Road, Anna Nagar East Tel 45508222



2 Face Lift

ONGOING TILL OCTOBER 25

Check out Spanish painter Gayatri Gamuz's famous collection of paintings 'It is a Girl', on display in the city. At 1/12, Ganesh Puram, 3rd Street, Off Cenotaph Road, Teynampet

3 Home Truths

OCTOBER 9 AND 10

Looking for a home makeover that's as stylish as it's cosy? Twotone Designs presents to you its second exhibition of high-end bespoke furniture to interact with architects and interior designers for customised solutions for your homes and office spaces.

Price Rs 5,000 onwards **At** My Fortune Chola, Mandalam Hall, 13, Cathedral Road **Tel** 28110101



4 Footprints of Life and War

ON TILL NOVEMBER 15

Gallery Veda presents us with an opportunity to explore visual records from a time when the traditional style of Indian art rarely included realistic depiction of the landscape. Dakshinapatha—A Southern Odyssey, is a collection of aquatints, engravings and lithographs, which will take us on a journey of unmapped territory, local wars, remote hill forts, buildings that have disappeared, pristine landscapes, religious processions, roads traversed by elephants, horse carriages and palkis, early maps and rare books.

Works by celebrated illustrators including Thomas and Willam Daniell, Robert Ker Porter, Mather Brown, Alex Soltykoff, Capt. Allen, Capt. Peacock and McCurdy, among others, make this collection a treasure trove of visual repertoire from the past. From the panoramic view of the Seringapatam war and Tippoo Sultan, fishermen off the coast of Coromondal, Pagoda at Madura and Government House at Fort St. George, the show features about 200 such works, which have been hand-picked and carefully curated to give a rare and holistic view of South India.

At Gallery Veda, Rutland Gate 5th St, Srirampuram, Thousand Lights **Tel** 4309 0422

5 Funny Men Alert

OCTOBER 18

Meet the Pundits, Chennai's very own comedy collective, who invite you to celebrate their first birthday with a two-day festival that's sure to have you rolling on the floor. They bring home a cool list of comedians from across the country, including Biswa Kalyan Rath, Daniel Fernandes, Kanan Gill and Abhish Mathew.

Passes bookmyshow.com

Timing 7 p.m.

At Museum Theatre, No. 406, Pantheon Road, Egmore
Tel 2819 3238



6 Nose for style

OCTOBER 10

Forum Art Gallery presents The Invisible You, a smell workshop by Monika Ghurde for participants aged 15 and above. Ghurde, an independent perfumer and researcher based out of Goa, has worked and traveled extensively in South East Asia and Europe. The workshop aims to make you aware of your surroundings and enrich your everyday life.

Timing 10.30 a.m. to 12.30 a.m. and 3.00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m.
At 57, 5th Street, Padmanabha Nagar, Adyar



7 Natural Self

ONGOING TILL OCTOBER 28

Apparao Galleries presents 'Everywhere, Everyday', an exhibition of artwork by renowned artists, who experiment with the five elements of nature, and their relationship with the five senses of the human body. The exhibition explores the deconstruction of these elements in the paintings and gives the viewer an insight into the artist's mind.

At The Leela Galleria, TheLeela Palace, Adyar Seaface, MRC Nagar Tel 33661234

8 Italian Rhapsody

ONGOING TILL OCTOBER 11

Amethyst's The Wild Garden Café presents Italian Rhapsody, a special menu featuring Pizza Margherita, Pizza Primavera, Four Cheese Pizza, Oven Baked Penne with Mushroom and Cheddar, Grilled Chicken and Jalapeno Risotto, Tomato, Mushroom and Olive Risotto and Farfalle.

At Amethyst, entrance next to Corporation Bank, Whites Road, Royapettah Tel 45991630

